Exemplary Adult Literacy Programs and Innovative Practices in Canada

Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, and
Ministry Responsible for Science and Technology

Department of the Secretary of State of Canada
National Literacy Secretariat

EXEMPLARY ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS

and

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

in CANADA

by

AUDREY M. THOMAS

Prepared for the
Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee

Sponsored by the
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Audrey M. Thomas
Victoria, B.C.
June 1989

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Methodology

This project emerged out of the work of the Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee to the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training. It was closely linked to one of the Terms of Reference which was to "advise the Minister on innovative and practical approaches to literacy program development." I was charged more specifically to "research and report in writing on existing programs and delivery mechanisms for adult literacy that might be seen as 'exemplary' by adult literacy practitioners in British Columbia." The choice of programs was to be mine, but the stated preference was for a selection from British Columbia, elsewhere in Canada, and elsewhere in the world. I was further charged to provide a description of the programs in sufficient detail to be of practical benefit to practitioners. These terms of reference have resulted in this document.

The timeline and budget for the project were both limited, necessitating intense activity in a short period of time. Although it would have been desirable to include exemplary program models from outside Canada this was not found to be practical. All models chosen therefore are from Canada. I make no apology for this. Models which evolve in other jurisdictions are not always completely transferable to another setting. Canadian practitioners who have been in the literacy field for several years have taken elements of good and innovative practice from the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere and introduced them into the Canadian field with appropriate modifications. Other countries have or are compiling their own exemplary program models, so why should not Canada do the same?

The Association for Canadian Community Colleges is currently amassing a computer database on college literacy programs which, in particular, have partnerships with other organizations. Such a database will be a useful resource and tool.

The approach used for this project depended on personal knowledge, the grapevine and personal contacts. Requests were made of the field and government representatives for suggestions of exemplary programs and innovative practices in their respective provinces. From the responses, selections for possible visits were made. The aim was to try for both geographic and model diversity. Some initial telephone interviewing was done to determine the worthwhileness and feasibility of a visit. Unfortunately, many "innovative" projects had just received funding and were only in the early planning stages. This then, was another limitation for the project. It was strongly felt that an on-site visit should be made in order to meet the personnel involved and see something of the program operation. An itinerary was planned. However, due to program schedules and unforeseen circumstances, some programs could not be visited and adjustments were made accordingly. Also, because of the time factor, visits east of Ontario were not possible.

Prior to working on this project, I had developed an Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit. The criteria worked on for the development of the evaluation process and my personal participation in some of the field testing provided a useful framework from which to approach the programs visited.

There are, no doubt, many exemplary models other than those selected for this document. In time, perhaps they can all be documented. Until then, the selection here is a sample of the diversity of the literacy field. The first thirteen selections are descriptive case-studies of programs, many of which have been in existence for nearly ten years or more and thus have a track record. Some of the thirteen are younger, but were chosen because of some innovative practices or project(s) in which they are engaged. After these descriptions there are five shorter descriptions of programs or parts of programs which are particularly innovative or serve to illustrate a particular point. Finally, there is a list of some innovative practices among Native groups in Ontario. None of these Native programs was visited, but it is important to include them.

The Programs

A balance between institutional programs, workplace programs and community-based programs was sought. Literacy practice, however, is extremely diverse and the boundaries are not always clearly drawn between one kind of a program and another. Thus, colleges can initiate community outreach and support a community-based program as is the case with Vancouver Community College, Douglas College, and George Brown College. School districts and/or colleges can enter into partnership with a wide variety of organizations to support genuinely community-based programs as in the case of Calgary Catholic Schools. East End Literacy and Kingston Literacy, autonomous community literacy programs, are supported by many different sources including educational institutions. Workplace programs can be community-based as with English in the Working Environment (EWE), or labour-based as with the programs of Metro Labour Education Centre and the Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST program. The Metro Labour Education Centre, however, is also affiliated with George Brown College, and the local school boards support EWE.

Of necessity, most programs visited were in urban centres - Vancouver, New Westminster, Surrey (suburban municipality), Calgary, Regina, Kitchener-Waterloo, Kingston, Toronto and Ottawa. These cities vary in size, economic and social base but all have populations requiring help with reading and writing. Some of the programs visited serve their geographic or neighbourhood community and open their doors to anyone requiring help. Other programs gear themselves to specific target populations--for example the Ex-Offenders program of Calgary Catholic Schools and the Calgary John Howard Society, the Beat the Street programs of Frontier College, the Family Literacy program of Kingston Literacy, EWE's Core Literacy program, the Reading and Writing for Deaf People program in Ottawa. In these programs and the workplace programs the animating strategy is to take the programs to the people. They are all efforts to break down the psychological and physical

barriers which have prevented people from seeking help for their particular literacy needs.

Community-based programs have evolved in efforts to serve the learning needs of adults which could not or were not being met by formal educational structures. Sometimes learners in these programs come for a very specific purpose and when that purpose is fulfilled, they leave. For other learners, the program is a bridge or feeder into other educational programs existing in the community. Some programs become havens or sanctuaries for people with special needs, but coming to the program has its own fulfilment for these people. Community-based programs have continual funding struggles--something from which institutional programs are not immune, but the struggle is more crucial for community groups. These groups, however, are freer to experiment, to innovate, to be on the cutting edge of new practice. East End Literacy, for example, took an early lead in publishing student-writing--a practice which is now emulated in many programs. Kingston Literacy has come up with several innovative ideas at the teaching, program and support levels. Some examples are: the Country and Western group, Reading Evenings, Celebrity Book Auctions.

In many programs, an underlying philosophy shapes the program. This is the case with the Invergarry Learning Centre which believes in the writing road to reading and encourages writing as a means to literacy across a spectrum of levels and abilities. The results of this approach are seen in its publication Voices. Operation as a collective with a horizontal, participative mode of organization is seen in East End Literacy and ALSO. The application of learner-centred program principles can be transferred to institutional academic settings as the production of Humber Hotline shows.

The new technology is beginning to impact on the literacy field. Many literacy students are being exposed to computers and word processing rather than pen and ink. Computers apparently are very motivating once people overcome their initial shyness and fear. Disadvantaged adults are suddenly exposed to today's high-tech and know that in that exposure they have the advantage over many in the dominant society. Along with becoming literate, they may also acquire some useful job skills which may help them obtain employment. Computers are only a tool however, and literacy programs using them need to have other activities and supports as well. Because of the individual attention that is possible when using computers, learners appear to be making great improvements in academic performance. The STRIDE program of the Columbia Institute of Canada is having great success with the CCC system and Natives. A different high-tech model is provided by the Ottawa Board of Education's storefront Learning Centre. The Regina Public Library has been impacted by the widespread introduction of the PALS system in Saskatchewan and is going to have a PALS lab on-site. Computers are also being put to use in Ontario as a support for literacy practitioners--many programs are hooked into a province-wide network which they can use for conferencing, fast mail and so on.

There is a richness of diversity in the field; there is an excitement in the air as adult literacy's time appears to have come. There is more

public awareness and more money available for certain things than ever before--but funds for actual program operation, for core delivery, are often as elusive as ever. This seemed to be a common theme voiced by most programs. Funds are being made available for pilot and demonstration programs; ongoing delivery, however, will present some hurdles to many groups. Another common feature of all programs, and this is what has helped and continues to help make them work is the human factor. The leadership, dedication and commitment of the personnel involved provide a spirit which makes success possible.

PART I

The Programs

BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM
VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE - KING EDWARD CAMPUS

One of the largest most successful institutionally-based literacy programs is the Basic Education Program of Vancouver Community College. Currently situated in the modern King Edward Campus at 1155 East Broadway, the program has a fairly long history and used the term Basic Education (Basic Ed.) to describe its offerings before that term was generally used to imply all academic upgrading up to high school completion. Historically, at the college, Basic Ed. referred to the academic upgrading being offered to those persons who had not completed elementary schooling and is geared to those persons requiring what is now dubbed the Fundamental Level.

Background

The program grew out of an old Vancouver School Board program which started in the 1960s by offering a spelling improvement class to adults at the John Oliver High School. Many of the adults were people for whom English was a second language. They had developed English oral skills, but needed help with spelling and writing in English.

When the college system was set up in the province, the class became part of the Special Programs Division of Vancouver Community College. At this time, there was only one class, but as the English as a Second Language Program grew within the college there was a need for a literacy program to help those who had the necessary oral skills to develop more fully their reading and writing skills. Also, Canadian-born adults who wanted to develop their literacy skills started coming to the program.

In the early 1970s a Department Head for the Basic Ed. program was hired. The Department Head was responsible for the expansion of the program from one to several classes and for the hiring of several staff people for the program. During the 1970s the program was housed in a portable on the old King Edward Campus site, close to the Vancouver General Hospital. Present staff indicate that the portable helped towards the success of the program. It served as a 'storefront' learning centre. Students owned the place--they brought in furniture such as a couch and chairs, a coffee machine was also added. A motto for the program was: "Come and be happy with us in the hut." The program expanded due to word-of-mouth recommendations. There was no financial aid for students at that time, but fees were manageable. Eventually, the old King Edward campus site was abandoned, an interim site was occupied while the new campus was developed, and the program moved into the new building at the present site in 1984.

Objectives

The goal of the program is to teach adults to read and write. Within that overarching goal, however, staff work with learners on their individual goals and objectives. The curriculum and courses have developed around the needs of the students.

In the early days, Laubach materials were used as they were the only materials readily available. However, a core curriculum of skills was developed and its implementation was modified by students' experiences,

needs and interests. An underlying theme of the program is also to build the self-confidence of the learners--for example, to give learners the courage to stand up before a group and voice their concerns. The new location in a college building has a positive impact on the morale of learners studying there. There are also the added benefits of plugging into college activities and services.

Staffing

Basic Ed. operates as an institutional program with classes and full-time instructors. There are 13 instructors and one program assistant. There are seven full-time people including the Department Head. The other six people are on term contracts of one half to three- quarters full-time equivalent. One of these positions includes a half-time assessment and placement position on a permanent contract basis.

Since the early expansion of the program there have been four Department Heads. Each of these Heads was an instructor previously. Seven of the current 13 staff persons have been associated with the program for 10 years or more, thus providing a continuity and a solid core of experience within the program.

Clientele

Currently (Spring 1989) there are 295 places in the Basic Ed. program. These are occupied by 246 persons. The registrations were as follows:

116	enrollments in English for day program
87	enrollments in Mathematics for day program
203	total day enrollments
57	enrollments in English for night program
35	enrollments in Mathematics for night program
92	total night enrollments.

Some people registered for both English and Mathematics, hence the higher number of enrollments than people registered.

The average age of the learners in the day program is in the late 20s. Many of these are unemployed people and 70 percent of them receive sponsorship to attend the program on a full-time basis. The average age of the learners in the night program is in the 40s. Many of these people are employed men and therefore there is less sponsorship among night attendees. These older adults tend to be more confident than the day-time learners and tend to have more of an ESL background than the day learners.

Delivery

The usual delivery mode is teaching in small groups in a classroom setting. At the non-reading level, there are less than six learners in a group. As the reading level increases, so do the number of learners in a group, the maximum instructor/learner ratio being 1:17.

Seven classrooms are in almost continual use and staff collaborate

with each other in co-operative teaching. Fifteen hours of English are offered Monday to Friday mornings. The core curriculum is used on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays there is a "specialty class" offered. After a learner has been in the program for two weeks, special skills on which to work are identified. Such skills might include typing, intensive writing, or working on computers.

Mathematics are offered in five-hour blocks on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. Evening classes for English are offered from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays and classes for Mathematics are offered in the same time slots on Mondays and Wednesdays.

The program has two main semesters of four months (September to December and January to April) and a mini-term in May and June. During July and August, one mathematics class of five hours a week and an advanced English class of 10 hours a week are offered.

Learners operating at less than a grade 4 level are likely to stay in the program for two years before moving on--other things being equal. Someone who enters at approximately that level could finish the Basic Ed. program in eight months or a year before moving on to other activities.

The Basic Ed. program has been seen as a feeder into other college programs--either academic upgrading for college prep. programs, or for vocational skills training. Some learners whose mother tongue is not English, may go into specialized ESL programs such as pronunciation classes. It is estimated that 70 percent of Basic Ed. learners go on to other classes within the college.

There is a Bridge Class within the college which currently is mainly composed of Middle East immigrants. These learners have English fluency but minimal literacy skills. They work on the latter in order to gain entry to the Basic Ed. program. The Basic Ed. program currently cannot cope with emotionally and mentally disabled populations, but tries to accommodate physically disabled learners when possible. When a learning disability becomes apparent, students can be referred to the Individualized Education Program for Adults (IEPA) within the College. Here, they receive diagnostic testing and one-to-one tutoring with a professional specialist. It is estimated that about 15 percent of the students in the Basic Ed. program make use of this service.

Administration

The success of the Basic Ed. program is seen, in part, to be based on the collegiality which exists between staff. The department heads have been drawn from instructors in the program. When the position of Department Head is open for appointment, the staff decides who they want at the helm. The instructors are seen as being a "different breed" from other college instructors. There is an inbuilt commitment to the social work element of literacy work. Staff are sensitive to the other things going on in students' lives which may affect their learning progress. People receive educational counselling on entry into the program, but there is much personal problem-solving and referral and counselling throughout the learner's stay in the program. Staff take the personal care that is necessary for the

success of the program. Telephone calls, for instance are sensitively dealt with and followed up. Learners coming to the campus for the first time are given clear instructions where to go and are frequently met at the door to be guided through the labyrinth and multi-levels which comprise the King Edward campus. The literacy logo is now to be seen in various parts of the campus--pointing the way to the reading and writing program.

When staff need to be hired, the Department Head and at least one instructor form part of the interviewing team. The interview process is said to be rigorous and provides an opportunity for identifying issues and problems. If the candidates are deemed to be suitable, they are asked to spend a half-day or a full-day observing an experienced instructor in class. Interaction with the instructor is important. The candidates are then put on a substitute teaching list and called in to do some teaching. This gives an opportunity for informal evaluation and feedback. When the successful candidates start in the program, they are paired or linked with an existing instructor in a "buddy system" approach for support and continuing informal evaluation.

The program is continually being evaluated in informal ways among staff, and learners have opportunities to evaluate instructors and the program generally. In addition, a professional development day in the Spring provides an opportunity for reflecting on the program, appraising past performance and planning ahead for new projects. There is commitment to in-service training and staff development. Staff have opportunities to attend conferences and workshops and are involved in provincial literacy activities as well.

New Activities

Since September 1988, there has been a Learners' Activity Centre, where learners can use typewriters, play computer games, borrow magazines and videos. The Centre thus doubles as a resource centre and has been quite popular. In 1987, a student magazine Impress was begun. This is published once a term and includes student writing and illustrations. It is produced by the students themselves.

Outreach

The Basic Ed. program has long been a "lighthouse" for many in the literacy field. It was one of the first colleges in Canada to publish its literacy curriculum in the late 1970s. Since then, other publications have been made available. The program has a well-stocked resource centre for staff. Because of its recognized experience and expertise, the Basic Ed. program gets requests to "do literacy" in the community, and to train others. Time and financial resources, however, often determine whether these activities may proceed or not.

At present, there are programs in two off-campus centres--First United Church and the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House. The program at First United Church has operated for nine years. It serves a population in Vancouver's East End which is not served by existing programs. The church is the anchor of the program which provides a safe environment for learning to read, write and socialize in a small group setting. The college provides one

part-time instructor and supplies. The program originally ran for five hours a week, but this was doubled to 10 hours a week in September 1988. The volunteers who work in the program are identified and recruited by the church from among churchgoers/workers.

The Mount Pleasant program is a more recent one. This was a pilot program with multiply physically handicapped learners. It started in January 1989. A group of potential disabled learners calling themselves the Broadway Connection approached the college for help. A course was mounted with a part-time instructor (.25 time) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Volunteers act as guides and other aides to the learners. The program will continue with a five hour class for abled and disabled learners in September 1989.

Funding

The Basic Ed. program is funded through the college base budget.

Summary

The strengths of the Basic Ed. program which lead to its success are seen as belonging to two factors--the level of interaction between the instructors and the learners; and the calibre and commitment of the staff to their discipline and to the program.

Problems or weaknesses are seen as the inability to cater to a wider variety of disabled learners at the present time and the inability to respond to community needs because of financial or other restrictions. A need for instructor development and staff training beyond the College has also been expressed. Despite the longevity of the Basic Ed. program and its success, there is a feeling that the program has to do its own advocacy and continually fight for its existence.

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I-CARE PROGRAM - DOUGLAS COLLEGE

The Individualized Community Adult Reading Education (I-CARE) Program is the longest established, most successful community college outreach literacy program using volunteer tutors in a one-to-one relationship in British Columbia.

Background

In May 1977, Douglas College Council declared the establishment of literacy training as a top priority and hired regular literacy faculty in August 1977. A literacy class was offered in Coquitlam in September 1977 and in January 1978 the college accepted responsibility for the Langley School District literacy program. In between these two events the College Board supported the concept of using volunteers for the delivery of a college service.

The pilot I-CARE project was developed with funds from the Ministry of Education for the 1978-79 period. The geographic area originally served by Douglas College was considered too large and a new college, Kwantlen College, came into existence in the early 1980s. The I-CARE program stayed with Douglas College and because of the program's early success, the commitment of the College President and The Board, the program was incorporated into the college's base funding structure. The coordinator and faculty most recently involved in the program attribute the success of the program to the security of funding. It has been the key to the development of the program by providing continuity of planning and has resulted in good morale.

The program was developed to help meet the literacy needs of adults who are unable or unwilling to enter a classroom situation because of work schedules, negative school experiences in the past or other such reasons. I-CARE was designed to provide the services of a trained tutor and the back-up resources of a community college.

Philosophy and Assumptions

- -Opportunities to learn to read and write are not a privilege but a basic right.
- -Everyone is entitled to a second chance at learning.
- -Everyone should have the opportunity to learn to whatever level they are capable of achieving.
- -Returning to learn basic literacy skills takes courage and this should be recognized and respected.

Staffing and Delivery

I-CARE operates with one full-time coordinator who looks after the administrative arrangements, does public relations and conducts the student assessments, and a part-time faculty member who conducts the tutor-training sessions, writes the learning programs for the students and provides in-service support to the tutors. There is also some part-time clerical support.

On the average, the program handles between 50 and 70 matched pairs a year. The pairs have the option of meeting in the home or at the college. Tutoring can take place in a bright sunny classroom which has direct entry on to the street from Mondays to Thursdays during the day or Monday through Wednesday evenings. The percentage of those opting for tutoring in the college has gradually increased to about 70 percent currently. The idea of "going to college" appears to be appealing and helps learners get used to the idea of bridging from individual tutoring to a group setting and new programs after the tutorial experience. The tutorial sessions last for two hours a week.

For the Learners

I-CARE offers learning tailored to the learner's individual needs and goals. An initial assessment of about two hours is conducted with each learner in order to ascertain such things as long-term and short-term goals, interests, likes, past experiences, and to assess strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing and spelling. Many of these assessments used to be conducted in the learners' own homes but over the years more people have come to the college for this initial assessment. The coordinator is still prepared to go to a student's home, however, if necessary.

With the results of the assessment, the faculty person designs an individual learning program for the learner. The program is given to the tutor and includes a summary of the assessment results in practical terms, lists objectives for the tutor to work on with the learner and proposes a series of activities and materials for the sessions. Throughout his/her participation in the program, each learner has the opportunity to contact I-CARE personnel to express any concerns or have questions answered.

For the Tutors

> "When I volunteered to be a literacy tutor, I expected to do a lot of giving. I wasn't prepared for what my learner would give to me."
>
> A 1988 tutor in the I-CARE program.

Any one-to-one tutoring program offers the potential tutor the opportunity to be a key element in the learning process. The personal commitment to the tutoring and belief in the individual worth of the learner are powerful motivating factors once matching of tutor and learner has taken place. Douglas College has, from the beginning, defined the responsibilities of the tutor, has kept to its "entrance requirements" for selection of tutors, and the upholding of a tutor code of ethics. (See Attachments A, B and C.) It has offered as comprehensive a training program as possible, given the time limitations. (See Attachment D.) As the basic literacy field has matured and new ways of approaching adult literacy have evolved, the training program has been lengthened. (During the pilot phase a 10 hour training program was offered. This program has gradually been increased to 20 hours--10 sessions of two hours each offered over a two month period.) Three or four training programs are offered a year depending on the need and the length of the tutor waiting list. Usually up to 16 people are trained in any one program.

A unique feature of the I-CARE training program from the beginning has been the inclusion of supervised practicum sessions. Currently 12 hours of practicum experience is required of each tutor. The supervision of the practicum has been written into the job description of the college's literacy class instructor. The tutors have appreciated this practical experience. Thus, the training program offers a solid base for the beginning tutor.

As with the learner, tutors are encouraged to contact the faculty person if they encounter any difficulties in their tutoring or have any related questions. Periodic in-service workshops are offered and a Newsletter - I-CARE - Breakthrough - for literacy volunteers is also published. This contains recent reprints of articles of literacy-related interest, news of upcoming events for learners and tutors, as well as hints and suggestions of teaching strategies and other aids.

For the Future

I-CARE is considering setting up an advisory committee of tutors and learners to meet quarterly to review the program and make suggestions for the future. Ways of involving current and former learners in more networking activities are also being considered. I-CARE would also like to set up a resource centre specifically for tutors and learners. This would provide their own meeting place and opportunities to browse through materials and like activities.

Summary

This carefully thought out pilot program of the late 1970s has stood the test of time. Crucial to its success has been the early commitment of the College Administration and Board. That commitment is seen in the security of funding which the program enjoys. This has led to continuity among the personnel of I-CARE and the continued skill-building and development of the program's professional aspects. There is also a continuing need for the kind of help offered by I-CARE. The program has stabilized at its present level of service because funds have not been available for expansion. The program is cautious in its publicity/recruiting efforts for fear of attracting more learners and tutors than it could accommodate.

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ATTACHMENT A

Douglas College - I-CARE Program

TUTOR RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Adhere to the Tutor Code of Ethics. 2. Attend training workshops and practicums. 3. Commit one year to tutoring (approximately two hours of tutoring per week, plus preparation time.) 4. Report monthly (in writing or by phone) on tutoring sessions and learner's progress. 5. Attend periodic in-service workshops and tutor exchange "get togethers."

ATTACHMENT B

Douglas College - I-CARE Program

TUTOR CODE OF ETHICS
Because tutors place high value on objectivity and integrity in the service they offer, they uphold this Code of Ethics: The tutor has chosen to help by teaching reading and keeps that the primary activity of I-CARE tutoring. The tutor displays an attitude of shared adulthood and respect for students. The tutor protects the confidence placed in her/him by students. The tutor keeps in confidence personal information offered by a student. The tutor is bound to respect the confidentiality of the other tutor-learner relationships. The tutor refers a student to appropriate Douglas College personnel when that student requests help beyond the tutor's training or skills. The tutor does not speak on behalf of the I-CARE program without prior approval of appropriate Douglas College personnel. The tutor keeps the commitment of interest and time made to a student and to the I-CARE program of Douglas College.

ATTACHMENT C

Douglas College - I-CARE Program

TUTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Entrance Requirements:

1. Grade 10 reading level.
2. 17 years of age or over.
3. Speaks English fluently.
4. Personal suitability (compassion, reliability, patience, enthusiasm).
5. Will make a one-year commitment to tutoring. (Two hours of tutoring per week, plus preparation time.)

Method of Delivery:

Approximately 20 hours of workshops.

Four practicum experiences of approximately three hours each.

Materials:

Supplied at the workshops.

This course is offered free of charge, and a certificate is issued upon successful completion of the program.

ATTACHMENT D Douglas College - I-CARE Program

TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS - 1989

Session I

- Welcome to the I-CARE Program!
- What does it mean to be literate/illiterate? Implications for Literacy instruction.
- The adult learner and the volunteer tutor.

Session II

- How do we start?
- The adult learner and formal schooling.
- Getting away from the traditional methods.
- Whole Language and Language Experience.

Session III

- Language Experience in action.
- The learner's oral language: the best starting point.
- Is that a grammar mistake? Non-standard dialects of English.

Session IV

- Working with a learner's text.
- What is a **text** made of?
- The concept of **discourse** and its components.

Session V

- From the whole to the parts and vice versa.
- The concept of **context** and how to use it.
- Sight words, Phonics, Structural Analysis, Grammar.

Session VI

- The Reading Process.
- From a learner's text to other texts.
- Different types of texts. Why do we read them? How do we read them?
- Developing reading strategies.

Session VII

- Constructing meaning from a text: facilitating the reading process for a learner.
- Finding appropriate material.
- Adapting material to suit the learner's reading level.
- Questions to ask when doing instructional reading.
- Reading aloud. When? What for?

Session VIII

- Breaking the culture of silence: writing and thinking go together.
- The Writing Process.
- Why is "Creative Writing" not only fun but necessary?
- Practical or Functional Writing.

Session IX

- Spelling. Does it interfere with communication?
- Activities to improve Spelling.
- Lesson Planning
  - setting goals
  - planning sessions
  - assessing progress

Session X

- Filling our bag of tricks: tips, ideas, techniques, activities, materials, you name it!
- Wrapping up: Summarizing our experiences in class and during practicums.
- Program Evaluation.
- Certificates.

INVERGARRY LEARNING CENTRE, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 36 (SURREY)

Background

Tucked away in a quiet suburban street in Surrey is an Adult Education Centre which is gaining an international reputation for the literacy program housed therein. There are five adult programs in this former elementary school:

1. Adult Literacy Program of Surrey (ALPS);
2. Adult Basic Education (ABE);
3. English Language Training (ELT);
4. Work and Learn; and
5. Adult Secondary School Completion (ASSC).

ALPS is for adults who need to improve their reading and writing skills. ABE is for adults who need upgrading towards a grade 12 equivalency and General Educational Development (GED) in English, mathematics and science. ELT is for new Canadians. Work and Learn is for students over 16 years of age who want to work towards Grade 10 or 11 equivalency. ASSC is for adults who want to work towards their grade 12 academic diploma.

Philosophy and Objectives

The literacy program began in 1984 and is designed for adults who have difficulty with reading or writing in their everyday lives. The advertisements for the program emphasize the enhancement of reading and writing skills and do not tie these to any grade level. The Continuing Education Directory, for example says:

> Do You Want To - Learn to read?
> - Improve your reading?
> - Learn to enjoy writing?
> - Improve your spelling?
> - Get more out of life by being a better reader and writer?
>
> We can help - FREE

The philosophy of the program according to Lee Weinstein, the Administrator of the program "is based on our belief that adults are competent people who perform complicated everyday tasks with success and confidence. As literacy teachers we can assist these people in bringing their voices and skills to pen and page. We can best do this by creating an atmosphere where learner goals can be realized." Anyone having difficulty with reading and writing is a potential client of the program. Thus, students decide they need to improve these skills and enroll in the program. This leads to a great variety of skill levels, but also enriches the program. In particular, learners are finding their voices through their writing. This process has led to the publication of a magazine Voices which is receiving national and international acclaim.

Staffing and Delivery

The literacy program at Invergarry has 1.5 full-time instructors and

six part-time instructors. In addition, the administrator at Invergarry contributes some of his time to the program and there is part-time clerical support. The literacy program occupies a classroom in the Centre. When they enrol in the program, students make a commitment to come to two sessions per week. Scheduling is flexible. There is a small roster of about one dozen volunteers who come and tutor learners on a one-to-one basis. Volunteers thus supplement the work of the paid staff who go from learner to learner giving the help and support required.

The Centre is open from Monday to Thursday between 9 a.m. and noon, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and Monday and Thursday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Clientele

During any one semester there may be from 170 to 200 learners in the program. A representative sample of learners on the day the writer visited the program included the following people:

- A young man of Portuguese origin in his late twenties who wanted to enter a welding course at Kwantlen College but did not qualify. He was working on his literacy skills at his own pace, found the instructors helpful and was pleased to be in the program.

- A Syrian-Jamaican in his fifties who had been a boxer! He appeared well-travelled, but now wanted to improve his reading.

- A student of German origin in his sixties who was busy editing his own creative writing at the computer. He always wanted to write and now he had the opportunity to do so with mastery of the new technology as an added bonus.

- A Canadian woman in her sixties who came to improve her numeracy skills so she could better play her hand of cards when she was vacationing in Arizona.

- A newly married Indian woman from Mauritius. She was 35 years old and her marriage had been arranged for her by her husband's brother in Mauritius. She had never met her husband before coming to Vancouver for the marriage. She was past the marriageable age in Mauritius and came from a large, poor family. She was desperately homesick and lonely. She came to class to improve her spoken English and to break her loneliness.

- A young Japanese woman who was in Canada on an exchange program. She was improving all aspects of her English.

- A Saskatchewan-born man who had had difficulties establishing himself in the Vancouver area. Eventually, he found out about the Surrey program and had been coming for two years. He seemed to be quite at home shuffling his word cards to make sentences. He was also very proud of appearing in Voices and being made to look like a businessman in his photograph!

The fact that several of these people had had their work published in Voices or were about to be published (in the next issue) was a tremendous

boost to their self-esteem. They were obviously proud of their accomplishments and would seem to bear out Weinstein's comment that "our experience in literacy has been that the process of the learners' discovery of their voices as writers is the most dramatic step toward becoming literate."

Voices

Creative writing classes are offered to learners who can attend any of the sessions regardless of their skill level. Everyone in class is encouraged and expected to write, but not required to do so. The writing is read in class and the strengths and weaknesses are discussed. Language rules are taught within this context. Portions of classes are devoted to discussing poetry, literature, or different aspects of the writing process.

Material from these classes as well as the regular literacy classes provide the content for Voices. Because Invergarry has an open admissions policy and enrolls students with widely varied skills, the material produced is at different levels. New writers/first words contains selections with the easiest readability. Transitions/later writings are from learners who are further along in the writing process. Another section of the magazine is entitled Work/Notes. The selections here vary in readability and have a commentary designed to instruct and assist learners and tutors in the writing process. A fourth section--Theory/Practice is a forum for sharing experiences, ideas and views among instructors and administrators.

The first issue of the magazine was published in the Fall of 1988. The magazine is published on the premises at Invergarry under a production team of ten people, four of whom constitute an editorial board. Voices is soliciting articles from new writers in other literacy programs. It is attractively produced with a glossy cover in colour and with a photograph of one or more of the contributors. At the end of the magazine are biographical notes on the new contributors. As a vehicle for learner-produced material, it is currently without peer and a strong advocate for the Invergarry approach to literacy.

Funding

In the Spring of 1987, Invergarry formed a non-profit society--the Lower Mainland Society for Literacy and Employment--to raise funds for the following purposes:

-to offer financial help to adult students who need assistance with program fees, child minding, textbooks and transportation;
-to provide scholarships; and
-to help in the production of Voices.

Voices is now offered on a subscription basis and it is planned to have three issues a year. The hope is to make it cost-recovery. To this end, some casino nights and other fund-raising events have been held or are planned. A grant from Employment and Immigration Canada made it possible initially to acquire the necessary hardware and hire a small production team for the magazine under the job development category.

The costs of the literacy program itself are borne through School District 36 (Surrey). From seed money provided by the School District in the early 1980s and a class of 15 young adults, the literacy program has grown to be one of the most successfully operated school district programs in B.C. Funding, however, is still on a year by year basis!

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CALGARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD - FURTHER EDUCATION SERVICES

Background

The Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 1, known as Calgary Catholic Schools for short, made a commitment to adult literacy programs through its Further Education Services in the early 1980s. Since then, it has initiated several small-scale quality programs for different clienteles and has developed a number of interesting partnerships in the process. This account deals with five programs--a brief overview of two established ones, an overview of two which are currently being designed for implementation in the Fall of 1989 and a fuller account of the program offering literacy to ex-offenders.

Further Education Services Philosophy and Policy

Further Education Services is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to adults who wish to expand their personal growth, upgrade their academic skills and enhance their quality of life. Since society is in a constant state of change, the need for adults to become lifelong learners is realistic.

The Programs

Programs are provided in a spirit of cooperation and coordination with other continuing education agencies and with the financial support of Alberta Advanced Education and Alberta Education.

1. Reading and Writing for Adult Immigrants (Bridge) was initiated in 1982 with a project grant from Alberta Advanced Education. Three partner agencies were involved: the Catholic School Board, the YWCA Program for Immigrants and the Catholic Immigrant Aid Society. The three partners continued to cooperate until the end of 1987 when the YWCA chose to implement an independent program housed at the YWCA. The partnership between the other two agencies continues. There are three ten-week terms during the year. Classes are held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during the day and in the evenings.

2. Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) was begun in 1986 in response to a demonstrated need for additional literacy programs in Calgary. The proposal had the support of Alberta Vocational Centre (Calgary), and the Continuing Education Services Department of the Calgary Board of Education--the two largest providers of adult basic literacy programs. ABLE operates as a full-time day program--Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in two five month semesters. Students must be 18 years of age or older, a Canadian citizen, a landed immigrant or have Employment Authorization. There are no religious requirements. There is a $5.00 tuition fee but financial sponsorship for students is available from a variety of sources. The program is offered at two levels--0 to 4 and 5 to 9. As seats become available during the year, students are brought in from the waitlist. Volunteer tutors are an important element in the ABLE program. Tutors work with assigned individuals under the supervision of the professional teaching staff. This program is funded through Alberta Education.

3. Community Literacy Program for Disabled Adults. This program is co-sponsored by Calgary Catholic Schools and the Rehabilitation Society of Calgary and aims to address the problem of illiteracy in disabled adults within the city of Calgary. Currently, no one is specifically serving this population. This joint venture will pool the resources and expertise of the two partners to provide a tutor-based program headed by a facilitator and directed by a management committee. Opportunities will thus be provided for disabled adults to develop and/or enhance their reading, writing and arithmetic skills. A total enrollment of up to 15 adults is anticipated for the first year which begins in September 1989. It is estimated that there are 24,773 disabled persons in Calgary with eight years of schooling or less. The program is funded through Alberta Advanced Education.

4. Latin American Literacy Partnership Project. This project is a partnership venture between the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary Catholic Schools, Escuela Latino Americana de los Sabados (the Latin American Saturday School), and Secretary of State, Calgary. The funding for the project is a cost-shared venture between Alberta Advanced Education and the National Literacy Secretariat, Ottawa.

The aim of the project is to attack illiteracy through two main thrusts--prevention and remediation. The project is geared to Latin American women with low literacy skills and preference is to be given to women with children between the ages of two and five years. The women will work toward developing the literacy skills they need to meet their parenting, educational and career goals within their community. The prevention thrust of the project will concentrate on the pre-schoolers of the women and will be an enrichment program aimed at narrowing the learning experience gap between the children and those with whom they will be competing at school.

The program design for both aspects aims to marry aspects of assimilation into the dominant society and aspects of cultural pluralism to allow both to occur according to the needs and desires of the group. The need to maintain language and cultural roots will be an integral part of the program design.

The program will accommodate more adults than children. Anticipated numbers are 25 to 30 adult women and 10 to 15 pre-school children over the age of two. The women's program will be divided into two terms of 450 hours. The first term (September to January) will offer general literacy; the second term (February to June) will offer literacy related to specific pre-determined employment related goals. The program will be integrated to the extent that the mothers of the pre-school children will spend the first half hour and the last half hour of their classes with their children in the children's program.

The resources offered by the sponsoring organizations to the project are as follows:

Secretary of State (local)	- consultation, - problem-solving.
Calgary Catholic Schools	- volunteer coordination, - immigrant programs experience, - literacy experience.

Calgary Catholic Immigrant Society
- immigrant children's centre,
- refugee/immigrant resources,
- settlement integration.

Escuela Latino Americana de los Sabados
- curriculum,
- student identification,
- Latin American community liaison,
- culture specific information.

Representatives of these groups will form the Management Committee for the project.

5. Literacy for Ex-Offenders started as a joint venture with the Calgary John Howard Society and Calgary Catholic Schools in 1984. The Society had identified a literacy need among its clientele--both male and female ex-offenders and inmates and their families. In order to access educational funds it needed a partner among the educational institutions. Calgary Catholic Schools became that partner. The major funding for the project comes through the Adult Learning Support Services of Alberta Advanced Education, but smaller grants have been obtained from other federal and provincial sources. In-kind contributions such as tutoring and office space, access to photocopying and secretarial support are provided by the John Howard Society. The program site is not far from downtown and the VIA railway station in Calgary.

The age of the students ranges from about 19 years to 55 years with the average age being between 25 to 30 years. About ten percent of the population is Native. In the 1987 calendar year the total number of students served was 58, of whom 47 were male. Twenty-five of the total had a diagnosed learning disability and six had mental handicaps. Seventeen of the total were inmates in correctional facilities.

The aim of the program is to enhance the reintegration of ex-offenders through the provision of an individualized self-paced learning program designed to improve literacy skills and develop a more cohesive sense of self, family and other relationships. The project was originally seen as a bridge between the correctional setting and the educational community. At the beginning of 1988 the John Howard Society introduced a new pre-job training program called Finishing Time designed to serve 70 clients in its first year. The literacy program is receiving referrals from students in this program in addition to serving all of Calgary for the defined target population.

The position of project coordinator was originally a part-time one, but since October 1988 has been a full-time one. Instruction is carried out by a core of trained volunteer tutors. In 1987 there were 63 tutors who contributed 6,344 hours of volunteer time to the program. One half of this was actual tutoring time, the rest was roughly equally divided between the training period and lesson preparation. The tutor-training program is offered three times a year. The core of the training is Alberta's Journeyworkers program, but an additional segment has been added which deals specifically with the correctional setting and the population coming from that milieu. The tutoring takes place either in the John Howard Society

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space or in public libraries. The program is hoping to open a drop-in centre in September 1989 which would offer, among other things, a small group class to clients from the literacy program.

The program has encouraged student writing and started its own collection of easy to read readers written by students in the program. The program also encourages dialogue and conversation in the tutorial sessions as a means to building oral strengths and social and emotional health. Tutors keep in touch with the coordinator on a monthly basis and there is usually some kind of in-service or social event bimonthly. The program has an Advisory Group made up of representations from correctional, literacy and funding organizations.

With this special population, tutors have to be carefully chosen. The preference is for well-educated, flexible adults with lots of patience who can deal with the emotionally chaotic lives of many of the clients. Peer tutoring is also being encouraged. The drop-out rate in the program was considerably lower in 1987 than in 1986 and the number of tutoring hours increased considerably over the same period. Writings of students and tutors reveal that the events in clients' lives revolve around various offences, incidents of violence--beatings and shootings, prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide. In such circumstances the words of a current tutor take on special meaning--

> To any newcomer embarking upon the role of tutor, my advice would be, "Go slowly. Keep your sense of humour. Throw out any preconceived ideas of how the relationship is going to work, and, most importantly--take it 'one day at a time!'"

Summary

Calgary Catholic Schools Further Education Services appear to have the knack of entering into partnership with community agencies to provide services for those populations whose literacy needs have not previously been met. The programs are small and intimate enough that a team spirit exists between the various program facilitators, instructors and volunteers. The Administrator and Volunteer Coordinator have contact with all the programs. Although the Services are attached to a sectarian school board, the adult outreach is non-sectarian. A further example of this was under discussion as the writer visited the programs: a possible partnership in the downtown core was being discussed between the Calgary Urban Project Society, the Social Outreach Ministry of Central United Church, the John Howard Society and the Calgary Catholic Schools.

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REGINA PUBLIC LIBRARY LITERACY VOLUNTEERS

The Regina Public Library has long been a lighthouse model for library communities wanting to become involved in literacy. It inspired the Parliament Street Library Program in Toronto in the mid 1970s and served to motivate a group of Metro Toronto librarians to become more intimately involved in literacy activities from 1976 onwards. From the leadership in Toronto at that time literacy programs spread throughout the constituent civic areas of Metro. New literacy programs were started as in North York where the public library hired its own instructors and provided the necessary support services. In other instances, libraries provided space for programs sponsored by local school boards and/or other agencies. Libraries in other Canadian cities such as Halifax and Lethbridge also have literacy programs. The literacy movement among librarians has taken many interesting turns and librarians are natural allies in the literacy cause. Libraries are often more accessible and less threatening than schools for many educationally disadvantaged adults. Libraries can provide resources and information for and about literacy programs. Bookmobiles could become literacy-mobiles in rural and other areas. The Regina Public Library entered the literacy field in 1973 and is still in business with more learners than ever. The Central Library is a large, modern, pleasant building opposite Victoria Park in downtown Regina.

Background

The Regina Public Library (RPL) became involved in literacy training in October 1973. At that time library personnel worked with mentally handicapped adults in small group settings. Soon, other Regina residents were asking for literacy help and more classes were added to the weekly program schedule. By July 1976, the Learning Centre of RPL had five separate adult literacy groups meeting each week. Group size was limited to a maximum of six people.

The need for more individualized help became apparent and after some research RPL decided to associate itself with Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA). In May 1977, LVA field staff from Syracuse, New York gave a Technical Assistance Workshop at the library. This workshop trained the library staff and other interested people in the techniques which could be transmitted to volunteer tutors. The heart of LVA training is the Language Experience Approach. RPL ran its own first tutor-training workshop in September 1977.

Since then, RPL has regularly recruited and trained volunteer tutors, recruited learners and matched them with tutors and provided ongoing support and in-service. The Learning Centre also offers adults the opportunity to prepare for the high school equivalency examinations (G.E.D.).

In the Fall of 1986, the RPL Board established a committee to investigate means of expanding the program due to increases in demand from learners. Expansion, however, had to come from existing resources as the library faced a reduction in revenues. The Board concluded that literacy service would become the top adult programme priority and staff time and operational budgets were reallocated to accomplish this end. Staff in six

branch locations were identified to become active in literacy service provision. This provision became operational in the Fall of 1987. As of May 1989 there were 350 matched pairs linked to the seven library sites (the Central Library and the six branches) and 100 learners systemwide on a wait list. The library's aim is to serve 700 matched pairs across the system.

Organization

Management of the system literacy initiative was the responsibility of the Head of Adult Services under the direction of the Chief Librarian. In June 1989 a new unit, Community Services, came into being and literacy services are included in this unit. The Central Library literacy program has the equivalent of two and a half full-time positions and two additional people are employed on a project grant basis to help with the one-to-one tutoring through follow-up reporting and progress reports. The Central Library is responsible for about 80 percent of the total number of matched pairs. Central Library staff liaise with and give support to branch staff who conduct their own training and matching.

The size of the program now would merit more full-time staff. As this is not yet possible, volunteers have been asked to take more active roles in the operation of the program. The main focus for volunteers, of course, is the tutoring. Volunteers are asked to commit themselves for two hours a week (two sessions of one hour each) for one year. However, many have become involved in committee work.

There are now four volunteer committees in place. There is a Communications Committee which prepares a bimonthly newsletter for tutors. There is a Social Committee which plans social events for tutors and learners throughout the year. There is a Public Awareness Committee which plans publicity and participation in events such as mall displays. A Programme Committee is responsible for planning in-service training events and making recommendations for program enhancement.

There are also four small group classes which are led by volunteer tutors. There are four to six learners in a group. There are also learners' meetings twice a month and in April 1989, 120 learners attended the first Learners' Conference in Regina.

Tutor-training is offered continuously throughout the year. The Basic Reading Workshop of 14 hours is offered as well as the 12 hour ESL workshop. It is estimated that about one half of the learners are immigrants and natives. If people cannot be immediately accommodated they are put on a wait list. The priority for placements are learners who have no access to other educational opportunities, but the library also will take learners who require temporary informal learning opportunities while waiting for entry into an educational institution program.

Recruitment

Since 1987 Saskatchewan has had an ongoing literacy campaign using the mass-media. The staff have taken advantage of these for city-wide public

awareness, but rely heavily on personal contact--by attending service agency and community organization meetings--to explain the program and ask for help in finding tutors and learners. Tutors tend to be attracted by the media publicity, but learners come to the program mainly through referral and word-of-mouth reputation. The personal contact is what appears necessary to give learners the courage to take the first step forward.

New Ventures

Currently, as part of the provincial literacy campaign, the PALS computer system is being installed across the province. PALS stands for Principle of the Alphabet Literacy System and is based on John Henry Martin's beliefs and knowledge of the educational process. Adult learners learn to read through a writing process which includes the use of interactive video and word processing. The program is geared to the most basic literacy level (0-4). The library is having half a PALS lab installed. That is, it will have four computers and can accommodate eight students at a time. The facility will be open 12 hours a day from Monday through Friday with a possibility of access on weekends if demand warrants. Additional staff are being employed from provincial literacy funds to work in the PALS program, but the supervision of the project comes under the library's Community Services Unit.

Another provincial project which is impinging on the library program is the New Adult Writers' Coalition. This is a provincial coalition which is aiming to publish student writings as an International Literacy Year (1990) project.

Summary

The commitment of the Regina Public Library to the literacy cause is impressive. Not content with the level of service already being offered, the Library Board made literacy the number one outreach service. This meant shifting resources around so that this could be realized. The basic funding for the Learning Centre and one-to-one tutoring program out of the Central Library has been assured on a regular basis for many years. This ongoing commitment has resulted in continuity and security of program offerings.

The expansion of service meant that almost everyone in the system was made aware of the literacy program and that responsibility for it has become related to almost everyone's job. In order to make way for this expansion some other library activities have had to be reduced. The Head of Branch Services ensures that the branch libraries give literacy the priority accorded to it by the Board. The Library's Public Relations Department assists in promoting the program and Technical Services assists in obtaining materials. Thus, the many departments of the library are able to support the Learning Centre staff.

The Library is a non-threatening desirable place to learn and encourages browsing before or after tutorial sessions. However, it is perceived by some of the staff as a middle-class institution and thus not conducive to encouraging certain groups of people such as Natives to use its facilities. The Library realizes it has to work with other community groups

to help reach this population. A collection of Native materials is being built up and classes in Cree leading to English Language Training are being offered in conjunction with a community organization.

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BEAT THE STREET - A PROGRAM OF FRONTIER COLLEGE

Background

> Whenever and wherever people shall meet, there should be the time, place and means of their education.
>
> Alfred Fitzpatrick

This quote from the founder of Frontier College, Canada's oldest adult education institution (founded in 1899) characterizes the Frontier College approach to programs. Fitzpatrick founded the Labourer-Teacher Program where young men went to work with railgangs across Canada in the summer months, or in the logging and mining camps of Canada's North. The college worker laboured alongside the men during the day and taught them basic language skills at night. This traditional workplace model is still used by Frontier. However, over the last decade the College has moved into the social and urban frontiers of Canadian life rather than restricting itself to the geographic frontier. The College now has a range of program offerings.

HELP. This program was founded in 1977 by an ex-offender, as a job placement agency for ex-offenders run by ex-offenders. Since its inception the program has secured over 20,000 job placements for ex-offenders. By the 1987-88 year 1987-88 it is estimated that over 29,000 person-to-person visits were made to employers resulting in some 5,200 jobs.

There are currently two offshoots of HELP--a Street Readiness Program which offers two weeks of pre-release preparation for inmates to facilitate transition to the "outside." The HELP Freedom Farm in Eastern Ontario helps with the transition back to society by offering training and job orientation activities to newly released inmates.

Frontier College is an administrative trustee of the program and offers literacy training and upgrading support for people identified and referred by HELP.

Beat the Street. One of the people referred by the HELP program to Frontier for literacy help was Tracy LeQuyere who, with Rick Parsons, founded the Beat the Street program in 1985. Tracy, a grade 3 dropout, learned to read at age 33 and this became a turning point in his life. He began to look at the street people in Toronto and wondered why no one was helping them. The first year the program operated on a shoestring and started helping bag ladies to tutor bag ladies, and bikers to help bikers. The street became the classroom. So was born a peer-tutoring program to meet the street people where they hang-out and help them acquire the education and skills they require to get off the street and participate more fully in the world around them.

As funding became available for the program it was able to establish a storefront learning centre and to expand its service. Imperial Oil has made substantial financial contributions to the Toronto program which has attracted much media attention and also earned for its co-founders the T. Roby Kidd Special Citation for a "significant and innovative contribution to adult education." Other funders include the Toronto Board of Education, the

Ontario Ministry of Skills Development, and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

In any given month over 49 learners were matched with tutors in Beat the Street, Toronto. Some people drop-in for a chat, but if they are not interested in learning, leave the Centre. The Toronto Centre has started a 100 hour club for those people who have logged up 100 hours of instruction. When people have acquired sufficient literacy skills they may enroll in correspondence courses or be ready to seek employment. Many move into more stable housing situations.

The first lesson is usually the street walk which provides an opportunity to informally assess the attitudes, strengths and weaknesses of the learner. After this experience, tutor and learner start working with Frontier's SCIL program (Student-Centred Individualized Learning). Some "straight" people may help with tutoring, but the underlying thrust and philosophy is to have street people helping street people and the target age group is the 16-25 year olds, although others are accepted.

In 1987, Beat the Street received $1.2 million from the Federal government (CEIC-Innovations Program) to operate programs similar to the Toronto one in two western cities. Winnipeg and Regina became the centres. The funding is for a three-year period after which time the programs may be subsumed under local or provincial organizations. In Regina and Winnipeg the target population is predominantly Native and Métis young people.

The Regina program started in January 1988 and has one full-time field worker who visits existing social agencies and organizations as well as parks, arcades and shopping malls to make people familiar with the program and to recruit potential tutors and learners. Referrals have come from agencies such as the Mobile Crisis Service, Halfway Houses, the John Howard Society, Departments of Indian Affairs and Social Services. The Regina program also offers tutoring in a Halfway House and a provincial correctional facility for men. The Regina program has one full-time Coordinator and one other staff person who takes care of the registration and matching of tutors and learners. At the time of the writer's visit (May 1989) there were more students than tutors so some tutors had more than one student. The street is used as a teaching laboratory, but people can use the storefront learning centre. Each time a student or tutor enters the centre their time in the centre is logged. The Regina program tends to help people who cannot be helped by the Regina Public Library program.

The clientele of Beat the Street in Regina is different from that of the Toronto program, and there is less actual living on the street because of the more severe climate in Regina. However, the target age group is the same and Regina is dealing with youth lost to the regular school system through early drop-out as in Toronto.

Other Frontier College Programs

Independent Studies Program meets the needs of students who want a second chance at learning. Students include immigrants and disabled adults who are tutored on a one-to-one basis using the SCIL Program. There are currently about 70 matched pairs in the Toronto area.

Prison Literacy Initiative operates in eight Federal prisons in the Kingston area. Community and inmate tutors are matched with inmate learners. There are currently about 60 matched pairs.

Workplace Literacy. Frontier received funding from the Innovations Program of Employment and Immigration Canada to set up five workplace literacy sites as models of workplace learning programs. The funding is until December 1990. Two sites currently operating in Toronto are in unorganized workplaces. One, being developed in Manitoba, is in a unionized workplace.

Read Canada is Frontier's latest initiative designed to encourage children to read and make them realize the importance and joy of reading. The official launch of the program is to take place on July 1, Canada Day, with a series of Reading Tents on the lawns of the provincial legislative buildings across Canada. The Reading Tent was used in the College's early days on the frontier and has been resurrected as a symbol of the importance of literacy in everyday life today.

Summary

Frontier's approach has been to develop program models to prove that they are feasible. The aim is to show that a particular model works so that others may emulate it, rather than to attempt to meet literacy needs on a numerical basis. When the model is duplicated elsewhere the aim is usually for local authorities or communities to eventually assume responsibility for the program.

All Frontier College programs with an adult literacy focus are based on the SCIL methodology designed to cater to individual needs. This leads to one-to-one tutoring in most cases and the tutoring is done by peers whenever possible. Peer tutoring stems from the idea of self-help and similar people understanding the needs and attitudes of learners from the same milieu. Generally speaking, another common trait of the Frontier adult programs is that they are geared to clienteles who cannot gain entrance to or do not fit into already established programs.

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ENGLISH IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT - CAMBRIDGE/KITCHENER-WATERLOO

Background

English in the Working Environment (EWE) is an autonomous non-profit organization with charitable status which has offered learning in the workplace programs since the early 1980s. It was one of the first workplace programs in Ontario and started by offering English classes to night cleaners at the University of Waterloo. It is one of only two or three community-based workplace programs in Ontario.

The program has since expanded to offer 22 classes of training for immigrant workers and first language speakers in 15 companies in the Waterloo region and runs a full-time community literacy program for disadvantaged downtown residents (Core Literacy). Types of workplaces include textile and footwear companies, car parts' manufacturers, a rope factory and a restaurant. EWE works in unionized and non-unionized workplaces and in the 1988-89 year trained 280 learners and had 16,500 hours of contact time.

Objectives of EWE

- To provide immigrants and English as a first language residents of the regional municipality of Waterloo with English as a tool which they can use to bring about positive changes in their own lives and in the community.

- To alleviate isolation of immigrants and first language residents resulting from poor communication skills in the workplace and in Canadian society by providing:

  (a) English classes in the working environment, and
  (b) English and first language classes for groups with special needs.

- To cooperate with existing community groups to provide support and advocacy for immigrants and first language residents with literacy needs.

Testimonials About EWE From Key Players

Workers say:

- "I talk to others at work now."

- "You start. You speak nothing. Now you speak a little. You understand a bit more all the time."

- "I learned a lot about company health and safety rules."

Employers say:

- "I know that long term investments are needed to produce changes. EWE is a worthwhile program."

- "Our workers understand more instructions now, we don't need to rely on translators."

- "Our employees are now able to communicate with each other and discuss with their supervisor what is required of them . . . they can take the English home with them too."

Unions say:

- "Members can more easily understand what is expected of them in Health and Safety."

- "When we meet for contract ratification they can understand what they are voting on."

- "Workers who have completed EWE training attend more meetings . . . understand proceedings."

Funding

The program is funded from several sources:

(a) Core funding comes from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship's Multicultural Workplace Program (MWP). This provides for the EWE Coordinator's salary and EWE's operating budget.

(b) Funds for the lead trainer's salary, some trainers' salaries, professional development activities, materials and other program elements come from the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development's Basic Skills in the Workplace Program.

(c) Both the Waterloo Region Separate School Board and the Waterloo County Board of Education contribute to the salaries of the workplace trainers and the Waterloo County Board of Education supplies office space for EWE. If the number of learners in a class falls below nine when the trainer is a school board employee, the company subsidizes the shortfall.

(d) The United Way of Cambridge became a funder of EWE in 1987-88 and made possible the hiring of a part-time Marketing Representative for EWE. The United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo provided a Demonstration and Development grant to EWE for 1988 and 1989. EWE has been granted membership in the United Way of Cambridge and has been invited to apply for membership in the United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo for 1990.

(e) The Core Literacy Program receives funding for the coordinator's salary and operating expenses from the Ontario Community Literacy Program of the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development.

(f) From time to time EWE is able to access federal funds for special projects, e.g. CEIC Section 38 grant program.

Training and Delivery

EWE has a lead trainer who has been with the program several years. Trainers for the workplace are selected by an interview process with EWE's Personnel Committee. Training consists of an initial orientation period of two hours. Contacts are made with the Company desiring the training. Expectations are discussed and a tour of the plant is arranged in order to get as complete a picture as possible of the working environment. Permission to take photos or to make drawings of plant layout, machinery and so on is obtained as these may form one of the major foci of the curriculum to be offered. Language assessments are done and if needs warrant, multi-level classes are formed.

Classes meet usually twice a week for one and a half hours to a total of 40 hours, which means the average program lasts for about three months. The companies pay EWE a fee for the needs assessment which is usually done outside work time, but in almost all cases, companies provide release time for the EWE classes. One exception in recent times was a restaurant where workers attended classes after their evening shift at 10:00 and 11:00 p.m. Attending classes on one's own time after midnight is an outstanding example of learners' motivation.

Trainers write a report based on their tour and needs assessment and custom develop the curriculum to the needs of the workers in the workplace. Copies of the program are given to the company and the employing School Board. Evaluations of learners' progress is done half way through the course and certificates are awarded at the end. The classes provide a chance to promote other learning opportunities in the Waterloo Region for those who may wish to continue learning. Comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the program is required at the end of the program.

During the year a series of in-service workshops is held for current or potential EWE trainers. The 1988-89 workshop topics were:

-Expectations of EWE trainers in factories
-Resources at EWE
-Health and safety - WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System)
-Lesson plans in factories - real life examples
-Evaluations
-Intercultural Training
-Numeracy
-To be decided according to participants' needs.

Each workshop was held for three hours on a Saturday afternoon and the series was spread over eight months.

Summary

After nine years of working in the Waterloo region, EWE has a reputation with local companies and EWE finds it does not have to do too much publicity to advertise its services. Companies usually have a general idea of the needs of the workers in relation to their specific workplace.

EWE has produced some of its own materials:

We Just Don't Speak English is a booklet of about 50 pages (English version) written by newcomers to assist newcomers in adjusting to Canadian life. It is available for $1.00 per copy (postage extra) in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Laotian.

Opening Doors - A Guide to Cross-Cultural Training in the Workplace is based on a series of cross-cultural training workshops with industrial plant managers and supervisors in Waterloo and Cambridge. It is available for $2.00 per copy (postage extra). New initiatives include offering intercultural communications training for company supervisors and management, plus assessment of the total communication needs of companies in the Waterloo Region.

Core Literacy

This program started as a project of EWE in the Spring of 1987 to provide literacy training to patrons of St. John's Soup Kitchen in downtown Kitchener. It has since expanded to offer an alternative in literacy training for those adults who cannot be served by existing literacy programs in the region or for those who prefer a learner-based program approach.

St. John's Soup Kitchen is a noonhour meal-serving drop-in centre located in St. John's Anglican Church in downtown Kitchener. The Working Centre, a help centre for the unemployed is also located in downtown Kitchener and is a co-sponsor of the kitchen. Class space was originally offered by another downtown church - Zion United. The literacy facilitator hired had been an EWE trainer. He was responsible for recruitment, assessing potential students, designing the curriculum and evaluating the project.

The pilot project provided literacy classes three afternoons a week. It received publicity and a number of requests from people other than soup kitchen patrons proving the need for the alternative literacy program. Funding was received from the Ontario Community Literacy Program of the Ministry of Skills Development and the project changed location to the basement of the Working Centre.

A need for one-to-one tutoring was realized. In May 1989 there were 37 learners in the program and 24 volunteer tutors. Learners' ages ranged from 16 to 63 years with the average age between 25-45 years. A small group of learners meets at the Working Centre twice a week. On Tuesdays and Thursdays six matched pairs meet each evening for a two hour tutoring session.

Tutoring and class sessions are geared to the practical needs of the learners. The facilitator maintains a regular link and presence at the soup kitchen in the hope of attracting more learners from that milieu, but the literacy service is offered through many other social agencies. The program has expanded to offer literacy training in the Waterloo Regional Detention Centre and has been approached by other service agencies in the region who are considering literacy training.

Because of this steady growth of Core Literacy and the apparent need, the Advisory Committee of Core Literacy has decided to become a Board of

Directors and Core Literacy is aspiring to be independent of EWE by September 1989. Core has received funding from both the Public and the Separate School Boards and was applying to the United Way for funding as well.

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METRO LABOUR EDUCATION CENTRE - A Project of the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto

Background

The Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto represents 180,000 workers in 400 union locals throughout Metro Toronto. It is the third largest labour body in Canada (after the CLC and the OFL). The Education and Skills Training Centre is a project of the Labour Council. Since January 1988 the Centre has been affiliated with George Brown College.

The Labour Education Centre started with a Labour Studies Certificate program in 1975 and was affiliated with Humber College. In 1982 English in the Workplace programs were offered. When new funding became available for literacy and ABE work in 1987 the Centre was able to expand into these areas. A fourth program area is the offering of skills training for laid off and unemployed workers.

In the marketing of the programs, the word 'literacy' is generally avoided in favour of stressing skills development under the umbrella term Adult Basic Education (ABE).

Organization and Delivery of the ABE Program

Publicity for the ABE program stresses free English and Math classes at work and exhorts workers to "sign up today." Interested people are told to see their union steward or to 'phone: 971-5893 - the number of the Labour Education Centre.

A sign-up sheet asks, "Would you like to upgrade your math and English skills?

-To keep up with the changing technology in your workplace and society;
-To enter job retraining programmes;
-To increase your job opportunities;
-To further your education;
-To become more involved in your union."

Courses run in 25-week units from September to March; April to December (with a summer break) and January to June. Usually classes are held twice a week, for two hours at a time giving a total of 100 hours contact time. Classes are divided into Effective Reading and Writing (Levels 1 to 3); and Functional Math (Levels 1 to 3). A Computer Awareness course using lap-top computers brought into the workplace is also offered. All courses are accredited by George Brown College and participants receive a college certificate at the end of the course.

Prior to setting up a course, contact is made with the union and workers before going to the employers. As with EWE, a needs analysis is often done and a report produced. There is a fee to the employer for this

service. English and math levels of potential participants are assessed and the communication needs of the workplace are identified.

Instructors or facilitators are recruited from the workplaces and are usually active trade unionists who are trained by the ABE staff of the Centre. Because of the multicultural nature of the workforce in Metro Toronto, a deliberate effort has been made to recruit bilingual people to the staff of the Centre and as instructors. Among the seventeen staff persons of the Centre, seven languages in addition to English are represented and a much greater number among the 95 part-time instructional staff. These staff totals serve all the programs of the Centre, not just ABE. In ABE there are three full-time staff persons working out of the Centre and a pool of 40 trained instructors.

Classes are held in the workplace, in union halls or at the Centre. The instructor does not necessarily have to come from the same workplace as the learners, but s/he will always be a trade unionist. Potential instructors are given an initial training of 21 hours and an additional 30 hours during their first year. There is also a professional development day every six weeks. Centre staff are available to give advice and support to instructors when needed. Materials and supplies are provided free by the Centre. Classes in ABE are kept small 1:6 is the instructor to learners ratio. There is also some one-to-one tutoring given at the most basic levels. The tutors go through the same training as the class instructors. It is hoped that workers tutored in the one-to-one relationship will move on to the small groups. Instructional needs up to grade 9 or 10 can be met by the program.

Tutors and instructors are given time off to instruct and get paid $30.00 an hour of contact time. This amount is seen as contributing to preparation time and any travel time that may be involved.

In a number of situations instructional time is equally shared with management. That is, if the workers are not allowed the full two hours release time per class, they are allowed one hour on company time and one on their own.

The ABE program is funded through the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development's Basic Skills in the Workplace Program.

Towards the end of each term, an evaluation meeting takes place between the instructor, two students, the ABE Coordinator, and representatives of the union and management. The purpose of the meeting is to assess the course just completed and to prepare for the next term.

Publications

The Centre puts out its own Newsletter Other Union Voices in different languages for workers using the Centre's services. From the Shop Floor is another publication of the Centre - two volumes have been published to date: In Our Own Words is a collection of student writing from the first ABE class; Too Young to Retire, Not Too Old to Hire! is a collection of stories from laid off workers who joined the Skills Training Program. Yet another publication T.G.H. Workers Write was the result of one year of classroom

discussions, exercises and readings in the English in the Workplace program at Toronto General Hospital. Each story has pre-reading and post-reading activities outlined.

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BASIC EDUCATION FOR SKILLS TRAINING (BEST) - A Project of the Ontario Federation of Labour

Background

At its 30th Annual Convention in November 1986, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) unanimously endorsed a policy of lifelong learning and a program of action for the OFL. Thus was laid the foundation from which the BEST program emerged. The OFL applied to the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development for funding and in April 1988 a Coordinator for the project was hired with a view to September 1988 startup.

BEST was launched as a province-wide, workplace-based, bilingual project which is the largest labour-run workplace adult basic education program in North America.

Organization and Delivery

The province has been divided into eight regions with each region having its own BEST Coordinator. As workplace programs are delivered by the Metro Toronto and Hamilton Labour Councils, OFL does not deliver programs in these urban areas.

BEST programs are offered in English or French depending on the language of the workplace. Programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) are also offered to workers who need to learn either of these languages or to upgrade their language skills. At a workplace in Ottawa for example, an Anglophone instructor has been teaching ESL to a group of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant workers while a Francophone has been teaching French to Anglophones.

BEST programs are led by instructors chosen by the union from the workplace and then extensively trained by BEST's training officer. One hundred and seventy instructors had been trained between September 1988 and May 1989. A further ninety instructors are to be trained in August 1989. Instructors come from all over the province to a central point for residential training. The total training period is three weeks--two weeks initial training of 100 hours and the remaining week is divided into two in-service sessions of three days and two days each which take place during the course. All instructors get basic literacy and ESL training.

Publicity is done through the unions. If they are interested in a workplace program they can contact the OFL or the BEST Regional Coordinator. The latter does the necessary groundwork and needs assessment to make sure a program would be operational. The union has to identify the workers to be trained as instructors and negotiate access with the employer. Instructors are usually given release time and workers get either 100 percent time release or shared time--one hour of release time, one hour of their own time. Programs can run at any time for four hours a week in three terms for a total of 37 weeks of training. Scheduling can sometimes present problems in workplaces such as hospitals and hotels which work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In one workplace, the men meet after work hours but the employer pays them straight time for the first hour of class.

Some of the advantages of workplace literacy classes compared to community or institutional programs are seen to be the homogeneous nature of the workers. They all have at least one thing in common--a job. They also share in the particular culture of the workplace--different workplaces develop their own vocabulary and jargon related to the daily tasks. A fellow union worker is familiar with this culture and can use it in the training program.

The instructors do the recruiting and assessment of potential learners once they return to the workplace after their training but may be assisted by their Regional Coordinator. This process of setting up the program may take from a couple of weeks to several months. The Regional Coordinator acts as nurturer and support person to the programs, and the OFL Training Officer is also a back-up. Unlike the Metro Toronto Labour Programs, BEST instructors are not paid.

BEST is currently funded on a project basis (June 1989) at a cost per contact hour. The OFL also contributes funds and in-kind donations. The results from the first year of operation have been encouraging and BEST is gearing up for more programs in its second year.

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EAST END LITERACY -TORONTO

Vignette

It is a warm May evening in Toronto. The ground floor room of the Parliament Street Library House in Cabbagetown is full to overflowing--there are about 70 people of all ages, sizes and descriptions in the room. Doors and windows are open. People from different parts of the room are standing up in turn, announcing their names, their experience and reasons for wanting to be on the Board of East End Literacy. The Annual General Meeting is in full swing! From what people say, it becomes apparent that there is a mix of staff, volunteer tutors, learners and current Board members present. A previous decision has been made to accept all nominees/nominations to the Board.

The agenda is neatly printed out on flip chart paper and posted on the front wall for all to see. The financial statement is also clearly printed and posted on the same wall. Agenda items such as the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, the 1988 Financial Report and the Program Report have been dealt with before the election of Board members. After the elections, there are special presentations to retiring Board members who speak warmly about their association with East End. This is followed by 'entertainment'--one of the learners has written and sings a song--an appreciation of East End Literacy. Then there are the awards of certificates to students. To round off the evening, coffee, juice and desserts are available from a long table at the side of the room. People chat animatedly with one another and then gradually drift away. Another Annual General Meeting of this community-based literacy program is over.

Community-Based Literacy

East End's 1984 Annual Report defines community-based literacy as follows:

> A community-based literacy project is one in which members of a community share responsibility for providing adult basic education. The acquisition of reading and writing skills is integrated with the development of confidence, competence and understanding in all participants: learners and tutors, volunteers and staff. Community-based literacy programs thereby encourage community participation and development, involving adult literacy students in every form this takes.

Background

In 1978, a community worker and two community work students conducted a survey of community agencies in Wards Seven and Eight of Toronto to assess the need for an adult literacy program. After the survey was completed, they began tutoring local adults, holding information meetings, recruiting members for a working group and raising funds. Their vision was of a community-based literacy network which also incorporated community education

on the issue of literacy. These were the roots of East End Literacy (EEL) which has established itself as one of the most successful community-based groups in Canada.

EEL now serves the densely populated Wards Seven, Eight and Nine in the City of Toronto. It is located on the second floor of the house adjacent to the Parliament Street Library. The house itself is accessible from the street and on the ground floor is the Neighbourhood Information Post. The atmosphere upstairs is welcoming and informal. EEL has been in this location since 1981. That was also the year that a full-time coordinator replaced one of the part-time staff.

The first volunteer tutor-training workshop was held in 1979 and one-to-one tutoring was offered for the next couple of years. This was joined by small group classes in 1981. In 1982 the program began to stress student writing as an effective learner-centred method for creating learning materials. Two books by adult learners were published and other student-written stories appeared in EEL's publication Writer's Voice. In 1982, EEL was incorporated as a non-profit, charitable organization.

Since 1982, EEL has built on its successful foundations, provides one-to-one and small group tutoring to between 60 and 80 students at any one time, has affected the lives of hundreds of East End residents, gained national and international reputations for East End Literacy Press publications, and has taken the lead in developing new ways of assessing learners' ongoing progress.

In 1987, EEL entered a relationship with George Brown College to offer ten hours a week of study to a small group of students. The College's Community Outreach staff approached five community-based groups in Toronto to see whether they would deliver Level 1 training of the Ontario Basic Skills Program (OBS). The College found that it was not getting students at this level into the College. By creating these community affiliations the College was able to channel its OBS funds to where they could be most effective. This funding link made it possible for the community groups to offer assistance with child care and transportation. The affiliation has also opened the resources of the College to the community groups. One person within each of the community groups is designated the small group person and one of the community groups is more specifically responsible for the liaison and coordination between the five groups and the college.

Funding

The funding base is very broad. Grants come through the Ontario Ministry of Skill Development's Community Literacy Program, through the Toronto Board of Education, George Brown College, and a large number of foundations, corporations and service clubs. Funds for special projects have also been received from Employment and Immigration Canada, the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada as well as various provincial ministries. The space in the Library House is provided rent-free and the Library is able to help with the provision and listing of materials.

Staffing

At the present time there is the equivalent of five full-time staff persons who act as a collective. There is a strong Community Board and a strong Personnel Committee. All staff members are expected to develop a particular ability or field of interest and to share this expertise with others. Particular areas of expertise include finance and fund-raising, tutor-training, writing and book production. Job descriptions are reviewed every six months and changes in tasks made at that time.

Activities

Tutoring. The office is staffed from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Mondays to Fridays but the space is also available for tutoring on Saturdays and afterhours during the week. Tutors and learners come from the neighbourhood served by EEL. EEL is an English literacy program. About one quarter of the adult learners were born outside Canada but they are fluent in English. About one half of the matched pairs meet in the House space and the remainder in homes or other sites.

Tutor-training is offered four times a year. The training program is about 16 hours in length, and since 1987 students have been involved in the training. Tutors do a practicum and work with their students on the individualized learning plan which is reviewed halfway through the year.

There is a Drop-In group one afternoon a week for students waiting for a one-to-one tutor and those who want more than two hours of instruction a week. Reading, writing, numeracy and practical tasks are worked on. Group reading and discussion also take place.

The Writer's Voice group meets one night a week to develop stories and produce a theme issue of this journal. Attendance at these meetings can range from five to twenty people. Out of these meetings sometimes come ideas for other student publications.

Other EEL groups are the Students for Action group and a Women's Group. From these groups new publications have also been produced. EEL holds a Book Launch once a year to publicize its latest publications and to fête the new authors.

East End Literacy Press came about as a result of the dearth of suitable reading materials for adult basic literacy students and out of the language experience tutoring approach. It has now become a vehicle for creating, publishing and selling materials for community-based literacy programs across Canada and elsewhere.

Students are intimately involved not only in the writing process and selection of a suitable approach to tell the story, but in the editing and proof-reading as well. Illustrations are also discussed and if photographs are taken, students are involved in the taking, developing and printing of these. Sometimes a particular story is acted out and the student becomes the director of the production. Next come the layout and text setting. Then, the production is ready to be sent to the printers.

East End Literacy Press now has a considerable list of available publications including The New Start Reading Series and The Writer's Voice issues. The work of marketing, handling and distributing the publications became too much for EEL so an arrangement was made with Dominie Press Limited of Agincourt to do this end of the work. The proceeds are split between the two organizations so that EEL can recover the costs of production.

Advocacy--community or public education on the literacy issue has been an important aspect of EEL's work since the beginning and one which has not abated with the passing of the years.

Social events also play a cohesive role in the life of EEL during the year. The Christmas party, pot-luck picnics, the celebration of International Literacy Day, the Book Launches and the Annual General Meetings all provide opportunities for this large family of learners to come together as a group to support and enjoy each other.

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Reference

Anna Hemmendinger "Research Within Reach--If Not a Test, Then What?" Focus on Basics, Volume 2, Number 1, Fall 1988, pp. 8-9. (This article describes the ongoing student assessment procedures being developed as a special project at EEL. The material is being field tested in 1989.)

Note: The other four Toronto community-based groups which affiliated with George Brown College in 1987 are:
-St. Christopher House,
-Parkdale Project Read,
-Alexandra Park Learning Centre, and
-Toronto Alfa Centre.

KINGSTON LITERACY - ONTARIO

This community-based literacy group has been in existence for 12 years. Like EEL, it started from a research base, but the impetus for this initiative came from the library and the program evolved as a result of community partnerships. It was only when the funding picture became particularly bleak that the program decided to become an independent community group with its own Board of Directors to take charge of its own fund-raising. Unlike EEL the program has had several locational moves, but as an entity it continues to deliver quality service, has expanded its program outreach and initiated several innovative projects and activities.

Background

In 1976, Kingston Public Library staff became aware of a growing number of requests for books teaching adults how to read and easy reading materials. An investigation of census figures for level of schooling showed that there was substantial population of adults who had less than grade nine education.

The library was prepared to offer space for tutorials and gather a basic reading collection, but had no funds to help set up the program. With the promise of library support and cooperation, the Frontenac County Board of Education applied for and was successful in getting a Local Initiatives Project grant. This grant launched the "Reach Non-Readers" project. The workers conducted a door-to-door needs assessment survey in the downtown core and interviewed a variety of social agencies and community organizations. Potential adult learners were thus identified and the need for a program to complement existing offerings was established.

In 1977, the Adult Reading Program (ARP) and Kingston Literacy Council were established. The ARP was a joint venture between the Frontenac Board of Education, Kingston Public Library and St. Lawrence College. It offered training on a one-to-one basis and had access to a classroom site shared with the Basic Job Readiness Training Program (BJRT) of the College where one-to-one tutoring under the supervision of the ARP coordinator could take place. Individual tutorials were also held in the library. The Literacy Council was initially a committee of the Kingston District Council for Community Education and served as a forum for exchange of information on literacy activities and as an advisory body to the ARP.

The ARP was closely linked with St. Lawrence College from 1980-84, when it assumed sole financial responsibility for the program. This situation came about when the program needed to expand and the college had more generous funding than the Board of Education at that time. However, the College's financial situation changed in 1984 and it had to give up the ARP. The Board of Education could only offer partial funding. As the demand for the program was steadily increasing the Literacy Council decided to incorporate with a Board of Directors and to obtain charitable status so it could do its own management and fund-raising. These events took place in June 1984. By this time ARP was in its fourth location.

Kingston Literacy accepted the Board of Education's partial funding and went after other funding sources--especially Employment and Immigration

Canada funding--to expand its services. With a 15 month grant from EIC to fund the literacy 'training' of adults under 25 by volunteer tutors, a Read-Write Centre was set up in the downtown area. When the federal funding ran out, Kingston Literacy decided it could not operate two centres, thus the ARP facility which was in the less convenient location was closed and its activity was transferred to the Read-Write Centre. The name Adult Reading Program was dropped and the new combined program became known as Read-Write.

In 1987, the program moved to its present location in the basement of the Calvin Park Branch Library close to the Kingston Shopping Centre. Also in this year, a Wintario grant made the purchase of some computers and software possible.

In 1988, it was possible to open a Read-Write 2 Centre in the Greenridge Plaza in the north end of Kingston. This is an area of high literacy need. A cooperative arrangement with the Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Roman Catholic Separate School Board meant additional staff could be hired to help with this extra Centre. A small tutoring program was also established at Amherstview.

Another change was the addition of a Coordinator for a Regional Resource Centre for literacy groups from the surrounding area. This soon became established as a regional network known as Literacy Link of Eastern Ontario (LLEO) which in addition to providing resources, offers opportunities for Professional Development in the Region, Regional Publicity and Outreach, and Networking. LLEO has its own Steering Committee drawn from the Region and is seeking incorporation as an independent body in the summer of 1989. (The attachment of a Regional Resource Centre to a specific locality program has resulted in some confusion when funds have been sought for LLEO, hence its separation from Kingston Literacy.)

Organization and Delivery

Kingston Literacy is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under Ontario law and is registered federally as a Canadian charitable organization. It operates a literacy program under the style name "Read-Write." Any organization or individual 18 years or older may become a member of Kingston Literacy upon payment of an annual membership fee.

There is a seven member Board of Directors including a student representative. In addition, there are seven Committees of the Board--Finance, Nominating, Membership, Personnel, Property, Policies and Procedures, Fund-raising.

There are five permanent staff--Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, two teacher/tutor coordinators, and one administrative support person. Four of the staff operate out of the main Read-Write Centre. The Assistant Coordinator works out of Read-Write 2 with two adult literacy staff members paid by the Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Separate School Board. Both of these members have also been teaching at other community locations. It is worth noting that the Coordinator of the program has been with Kingston Literacy since 1980, thus offering continuity and stability through the ups and downs of the program's moves and funding history.

The main facility--the Read-Write Centre--is located in the basement of the Calvin Park Branch Library and was officially opened on April 23, 1987. There is sufficient space for tutoring, a resource area, a computer area, a kitchen and office space. The Centre is open from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. from Monday to Wednesday and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays. On Fridays it is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Read-Write 2 is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and Tuesday and Thursday evenings. It is in a pleasant storefont location in a small shopping plaza in the north end of Kingston.

The purpose of Kingston Literacy is to assist people in the Kingston area to achieve basic literacy and numeracy. This mission is accomplished through one-to-one tutoring and small group work by volunteer tutors and staff. The Greater Kingston Area has a population of 120,000.

Activities

Tutor-training

Kingston is a small city of some 50-60,000 people and has a distinctly institutional base to its society and economy. The population is mainly Anglo-Celtic. These characteristics are reflected somewhat in the literacy program. The staff of Kingston Literacy are all Ontario certified teachers and volunteers are generally very well-educated. Many have been with the program for several years. On the other hand, as Kingston is a university town, students from Queens provide a source of volunteer tutors. However, there is a high turnover of volunteers from this source, as most are only able to commit themselves for one year. Most of the clientele are Canadian-born with a significant portion being developmentally handicapped. Some of these learners have been in the program for several years. They were accepted by the program when they settled in Kingston following their release from an institute in Smith Falls.

In 1987-88, Read-Write enrolled 116 learners; Read-Write 2 had 26 learners and Amherstview had 11, making a total of 153 of whom the majority--84--were male. About 90 volunteers were involved in the program during the same period.

Kingston Literacy offers training in two levels of literacy--basic beginners' level and a higher level geared more to writing, spelling and critical reading skills. Prospective volunteer tutors decide at which level they would like to work and take the relevant training. If they cannot make a decision, they take both training levels and then decide.

The initial training is usually offered in six sessions of two hours each and is scheduled for afternoon and evening in order to accommodate the needs and preferences of prospective tutors. Since the introduction of computers, there has been a session on computer use built into the training. Many learners use the computers to write and edit their stories. There is also some software with reading and math exercises as well. The computer room is supervised two mornings a week.

Learners are assessed by staff and matched with tutors. In the Kingston program about 90 percent of the pairs work in the main facility

under supervision of the staff. The Centre is also used for private study and as a drop-in. After an agreed upon time, learner and tutor meet with a staff member to discuss the learner's progress and to plan future activities. The administrative and record-keeping aspects of the program have now been entered into a computer database. Computer networking is also possible between local and provincial literacy programs.

During 1987-88, Kingston Literacy's tutor-training expertise was used to train potential literacy tutors in the communities of Belleville, Trenton and Sharbot lake.

Another venture initiated by one of the tutor-trainers was to offer a series of four workshops on 'How you can help your child at home'. These were put together in response to a request from a group of parents who wanted to help their primary school children with their reading.

Small Groups

For three years there has been a Monday evening discussion group with eight to nine students in attendance. The aim of the group is to complement the one-to-one tutoring and provide a medium for discussion and debate on lively topics. The group usually chooses a theme and stays with it for some time. Topics have included: Capital Punishment, Nutrition, Elections, and Free Trade.

The Sight Word and Country and Western Group was started in the Spring of 1988 to help beginning readers with sight words in an innovative format. The group complements the one-to-one tutoring and meets two mornings a week at Read-Write 2. The aim is for each learner to eventually "own" the most frequently used 300 sight words in the English language. These words are found in 50 percent of all printed material and in an even higher proportion in country music lyrics.

Members of the group can bring in their favourite songs to work on. Cloze exercises, choral reading, flashcards, creative writing and the "wheel of fortune" are some of the activities that have been developed to enhance learning. The words have been divided into 12 parcels of 25 words, each 'parcel' constituting one level. As learners are able to recognize the words from flash cards, read the words in context, and write the words from dictation, they are awarded a certificate for completing the relevant level. Eventually, all 300 words should be mastered and be able to be used in reading and writing stories. Flora MacDonald awarded the first three certificates for Level 1 at the opening of Read-Write 2.

Reading Evenings and Let's Hear It

In the Spring of 1988, Kingston Literacy decided to provide a social opportunity for students and tutors in combination with a learning experience. Influenced by the Reading Evening Concept from Britain and the oral history movement, the group decided to hold its own Reading Evening. A relaxed coffee-house atmosphere was created at the Read-Write Centre where over 50 students and tutors were able to get to know each other. Those willing to share their work were encouraged to stand by their tables and read their pieces. As they did so, artists in the group tried to develop a

visual representation of the images created. Kingston Literacy has now had two Reading Evenings which promise to be ongoing events.

Let's Hear It was the name chosen in 1985 for the publication of student writing from Kingston Literacy. A Let's Hear It book has been published after each Reading Evening. The second book was produced for Kingston Literacy by LLEO using its new Desktop Publishing program which resulted in a very professional looking product.

Celebrity Book Auctions

These events have become a unique and innovative way of fund-raising for Kingston Literacy. The first Book Auction took place in November 1987 after seven months of preparation. It raised $2,100.00 through the auction of 260 books. The financial results were rather disappointing, but the event was a success so a second event was planned for April 1989. This one yielded over $4,300.00 through the auction of 72 books. The second event had more publicity, included a social reception and was held on a Friday evening rather than a Saturday afternoon--all factors deemed to have contributed to the greater success of the second event. The third event for 1990 is being planned with offers of support from several community organizations and institutions which should ease some of the organizational burden for Kingston Literacy.

Here is how the auctions worked: well-known Canadian authors and celebrities were approached by letter asking them to donate a book which they did not write but have found enjoyable or have found it influenced their lives in some way. The donors were asked to describe in their own writing on the inside front cover why the book was important to them. At the 1989 auction some items sold for as much as $160.00. The services of the auctioneer were donated and the event had the wide support of many community organizations and businesses including the City of Kingston who waived the rental fees for the auction site in City Hall's Memorial Hall. A catalogue of the donated items, donor, and inscription was available for the preview period prior to the auction, and there was a $5.00 admission charge.

Students For Students

This group started in 1986 and has met monthly since then. The group talks about student needs and discusses ways of making the Centre a better place. Students have held bake sales and raffles to raise money for special equipment and to help finance student trips. They maintain a birthday card list of students and send cards to those who sign up on the list.

The group elects a student to the Board of Directors and appoints another student to be the back-up person. Students are also involved in the editing and production of the Kingston Literacy Newsletter and Let's Hear It.

The group has also intervisited with other community-based literacy groups in Toronto and Ottawa and has had other field trips to Ottawa and Montreal.

Outreach and Family Literacy Projects

There is a concentration of subsidized housing in the North Kingston area. The Beechgrove Children's Centre was anxious to make its collection of parenting aids more accessible to the parents in this area. It donated books, videos and other material to Kingston Literacy. The collection forms the nucleus of a Family Resource Centre in Read-Write 2, and is available to the community.

It was noted earlier in this program description that there were more men than women enrolled in Kingston Literacy. Firmly believing that mothers strongly influence the literacy level of the next generation, it was decided to try to recruit mothers and structure a program around their needs. Child care is a problem for many women and there are attitudinal differences from men. These factors inhibit many women from actively seeking learning opportunities for themselves outside their homes. In an attempt to meet women on their own ground a program was started in early 1988 at a Kingston Housing Unit. At the initial meeting, women were invited to bake a batch of banana muffins and this evolved into a series of classes on metric measurement, multiplication and basic math.

From the expressed needs of these women, a special project--"Parenting Skills for Beginning Readers" emerged. In the early part of 1989, an eight week pilot program was offered to parents to show them how to read to their children and help them understand the reading process. Many parents have the attitude that reading belongs to the school and do not realize that they can play an important role in their child's developmental process. The focus on intergenerational literacy is aimed at trying to change this attitude. The first pilot program consisted of five mothers and seven children. A part-time person worked with the children and provided enrichment activities. The importance of modelling was stressed and videos were used during the eight week course. As part of the pilot, Kingston is Canadianizing A Parent-Child Literacy Training Kit which was developed by Push Literacy Action Now (PLAN) of Washington, D.C.

The family literacy initiative in Kingston is aimed at sole support mothers in subsidized housing, and is one of five such pilot programs in Ontario funded through the National Literacy Secretariat.

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COLUMBIA INSTITUTE OF CANADA INC., CALGARY

Background

The Columbia Institute of Canada Inc. is a private organization and brainchild of its President, Tom Snell. It first came into existence in 1985. After a successful first year, new programs and funds were sought. As of Spring 1989, Columbia was offering five different programs and has an additional one in the works for September 1989. These programs are:

-STRIDE (Specialized Training Resources in Developmental Education) which currently is training Native adults in basic skills;
-Individual Skills which is geared to mentally handicapped adults;
-Career Training geared to adults with IQ levels of about 90;
-Futures which is an intensive two week job search program for adults;
-Compututor which gives computer supplemental instruction after school hours to elementary and junior high school students who live in the neighbourhood of the school; and
-UCEP (University and College Entrance Preparation) which is the program scheduled to start in September.

Apart from the interesting mix of on-site programs listed above, Columbia is currently unique because it represents the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) in Canada and has used its integrated learning systems since the Fall of 1988. All of the above programs except Futures have a computer component. The one which makes the greatest use of CCC is STRIDE. This program is jointly funded through the National Literacy Secretariat and the further Education Services of Alberta Advanced Education as a demonstration project. Because of the results, and the systems' relatively easy use, it is planned to introduce the system in several remote sites in Alberta.

Mission

Columbia's mission is:

- To provide education/training and development opportunities.
- To assist individuals and employers in meeting employment needs and goals.
- To market training and education products and materials.
- To provide assessment services.
- To provide consulting services.

Philosophy

Columbia's stated philosophy is outlined in the following statements:

- Columbia is a flexible and responsive service organization that is quality conscious.
- Columbia ensures the balance between being highly results-oriented and caring about the development of each learner.

- Columbia treats individuals with dignity and respect in an honest, just, and fair manner.

- Columbia recognizes that maximum learning occurs when the content is relevant and the environment is supportive.
- Columbia believes the most successful instructors are professionals who: care about the learner; recognize marketplace needs; continually accumulate the most relevant knowledge and skills; have developed the ability to effectively communicate and facilitate the learning process.
- Columbia believes in working co-operatively and collaboratively with leaders from business, government, and labor to ensure the advantage of being at the cutting edge of new technologies and trends, and is therefore in a position to maximize service.
- Columbia's products and services will be of the highest standard.

Organization

Staffing. There is a total of 18 full-time and part-time staff. Fourteen of these are either program managers and assistants or instructors.

Clientele. There are currently about 80 students involved in Columbia's programs, the majority of whom are women. The average age of students attending Columbia is about 30 years, but the range is from 18 years to 53 years. The populations represented among its learners include ESL learners, natives, street kids, low-income adults, ex-offenders and special needs groups.

Delivery. Columbia is located in a former public school which now houses two private schools. With the anticipated program expansion and the long waiting list to get into its programs, Columbia is expecting to move down the street to larger premises. Although the building is in Southwestern suburban Calgary, it draws learners from all over Calgary and is accessible by public transport.

Columbia operates five days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. generally, but the Compututor program may operate as late as 7 p.m. There are informal classrooms for each of the programs, a student lounge and the computer laboratory as well as office space.

Each program at Columbia has its own objectives and needs. In STRIDE the main focus is academic upgrading and learners spend up to three hours at their computer work stations. The balance of their day is spent in group discussion and working on projects. The instructor to student ratio is a maximum of 1 to 8. The average length of stay is four months.

In Career Training, job skills and attitudes to work receive more emphasis than academic upgrading. Here the instructor to student ratio is 1 to 12, and the average length of stay is six months.

In the Individual Skills program the ratio is 1 to 7 and length of stay is about one year. The anticipated ratio in the UCEP program is 1 to 4.

The Futures program does not use any computer time because it has a quick turnover. This program has been successful in helping students find jobs. In the hallway of Columbia is a poster and a real brass bell, which

students ring when they have had success in finding a job. This job search program is considered one of the ten best of its kind in Canada.

At present there are no fees for the students at Columbia. The majority are sponsored by a variety of agencies--Federal and Provincial.

The CCC System

As this is a feature unique to Columbia, the rest of this account will deal with this system. Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) was founded by Dr. Patrick Suppes of Stanford's Math Institute in the late 1960s. CCC is a proven, integrated learning system used in the USA in many employment and occupational programs as part of a vocational curriculum, as well as in numerous school districts nationwide, and federal penitentiaries. The system offers:

-individualized instruction across the curriculum for all ages and levels;
-interactive courses using over 10,000 graphic images; and
-automatic management of student placement and instructional sequencing.

There are over 2,500 hours of available courseware in five curriculum packages--mathematics, reading, language skills, computer education and science. All subject areas except computer education include GED preparation and the language skills include English as a Second Language courses in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, Italian and Japanese first-language versions. For certain courses, a CCC speech system is available. The courseware is continually revised and updated.

The system produces individualized worksheets for students according to their performance. Course titles of particular interest to adult literacy instructors include: the Reading Network, Adult Reading Skills, Reader's Workshop, Practical Reading Skills, Survival Skills, Writer's Express, Adult Language Skills and Spelling Skills.

The system can be set up to serve one site but the MICROHOST computer enables multiple site management to take place through telephone data lines. Its multiple site service ability, its management capability and the variety of available software are some of the features which make the system attractive for use in more remote areas. The Native students using the system in Calgary seemed highly motivated working on their individualized programs. Computers provide educationally disadvantaged adults an opportunity to leap into the new technology and obtain job-related skills which many members of the dominant society have not yet attained. Columbia has been pleased with the academic progress made by students in English and Math since using the CCC system. With 20 years of experience in the U.S. educational field, there are also many testimonials to its effectiveness in a variety of U.S. programs.

CCC differs from the Principle of the Alphabet Literacy System (PALS) in that it provides "competency-based instruction and sequential skill development in a comprehensive system where achievement can be measured and reported over time." No authoring is possible with CCC.

The cost of installing or using the CCC system depends on the potential customer's needs. A one-site literacy lab with 10 work stations and all the available hardware, manuals, training, courseware, licence fees and maintenance would cost about $125,000 for the first year (1989 estimates) and $20,000 for subsequent years. Additional work stations cost about $4,000 each. A new network server system, capable of serving 32 stations maximum with no remote capabilities but all of the other above noted features, would cost $90,000 for the first year ('89 estimates) and $10,000 for subsequent years based on a one site lab with 10 work stations. Additional work stations cost $4,200 each.

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[1]Terilyn C. Turner, "An Overview of Computers in Adult Literacy Programs," Lifelong Learning: An omnibus of practice and research, Vol. 11, No. 8, 1988.

THE LEARNING CENTRE - OTTAWA

Background

The Learning Centre (TLC) is the first storefront adult basic education centre in Canada using computers as the primary means of instruction. TLC is a three-year demonstration project which started in May 1988. It is one of 22 literacy/ABE programs offered by the Ottawa Board of Education (OBE).

TLC is located in a former clothing store next to Ottawa's main shopping mall--the Rideau Centre. This is a neighbourhood which has been transformed in the 1980s. Boutiques and upscale restaurants have supplanted many older businesses and buildings, but it is still the home of many of Ottawa's homeless and panhandlers, a neighbourhood of soup kitchens and drop-in centres. The bright, modern, high-tech TLC is attracting about 140 registered students at any one time. The students come from 2 to 30 hours a week and spend anywhere from 15 percent to 65 percent of their time in the Centre on computers. The Centre is open 45 hours a week, including evening hours Tuesdays to Thursdays. It operates from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays to give Centre staff meeting, preparation and professional development time in the mornings.

The Coordinator and the Secretary of TLC are permanent employees of OBE. There are six instructors on temporary contracts--three for 30 contact hours, one for 20 hours and two for 15 hours. In addition, OBE's intake counsellor has her office in the Centre. Funds from other sources have made it possible for TLC to have a software curriculum developer on site and a researcher. Thus, TLC has a staff nucleus to meet its four objectives, which are:

- -to provide direct service to adults in need of basic skills improvement by establishing an educational model incorporating technology;
- -to provide training for teachers, administrators, tutors, graduate students and cooperative education students from the adult and secondary school panels;
- -to evaluate commercially available software and generate our own software which enhances adult learning and promotes maximum learner control and flexibility;
- -to research the value and applicability of computers in basic literacy instruction.

Sponsors

The founding partners of TLC were--Apple Canada, Apple Education Foundation, Carleton University, the Ottawa Board of Education, the Ottawa-Carleton Learning Foundation, the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development and the Department of Secretary of State, Canada. The collaborative network expanded to also include--Autoskill Inc., the Computer Connection, MECC (Software) Inc., Microsoft Canada, Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy, the Ontario Ministry of Education, Rideau Street Merchants Association, Robinson/Ogilvy Ltd., the Ottawa Citizen, Sony of Canada Ltd., and UNISYS. Each of these partners has made a special

contribution to the Centre either through direct funds/ grants, donations or loans of equipment, software and back-up services, through to publicity, community services and other in-kind contributions. One of each of the partners is on an Advisory Council for the Centre together with a student representative and OBE personnel. The Learning Centre Coordinator attends in an ex-officio capacity. Meetings are held bi-monthly.

The Program

Potential learners have an initial interview meeting with the OBE Counsellor, then they are assessed. Assessment instruments used have included the Ontario Test of Adult Functional Literacy (OTAFL), the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) and the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Results are then used in helping learners determine their long and short-term goals according to their needs and interests. Learners also complete an interactive Learning Styles Survey to find out which of the following four styles fits them most closely--visual linguistic, visual quantitative, auditory linguistic, auditory quantitative. Results from all assessment procedures are being documented as part of the research component of TLC.

Each instructor is responsible for a number of students. The instructor and the student turn the objectives into a learning plan. Each student has his/her own folder. The students sign in on entering the Centre, pick up their own folder and work with the suggested activities. Instructors are available to give individual help. Periodic ongoing assessment sessions also take place. The mornings at TLC are usually very busy. Computer time is not scheduled in; students are encouraged to develop social coping skills in relation to computer use. While waiting for a computer, students can work with print materials or with their instructor. Software is available in English and in French.

There are 20 computers in the Centre: four Apple GCs, six Macintosh, eight ICONS, one IBM clone and one Commodore. The most popular among the students is the Macintosh. The MacWrite program is frequently used. Students produce a monthly newsletter using desktop publishing. With the use of Shell Disks, instructors can develop their own courseware. The Centre started a monthly newsletter in May 1989 to analyse and evaluate available adult literacy courseware.

TLC is linked to other Ontario literacy programs through the computer literacy network managed by George Brown College, Toronto. It is also a registration centre for the Ontario Independent Learning Centre's (ILC) correspondence courses. Learners may work on these courses in the Centre and TLC is a test site for the ILC's tests. TLC is thus meeting a variety of learners' needs.

The advantages of computers for adults with low educational attainment are seen as:

-provision of a mode of learning not associated with previous school experiences;
-provision of individualized learning--students can learn at their own rate, can repeat lessons on demand and test comprehension immediately;

-flexibility of scheduling around job and family duties;
-acquisition of high-tech marketable skills such as word- processing and data entry while learning basic skills.

For the above reasons, computers are seen as highly motivational learning tools. A student's self-esteem grows once he/she learns to manipulate the machine and the academic work can take off. However, computers are not for everyone. Some programs have found that older learners are computer-shy. TLC's statistical analysis shows that most of their student withdrawals come within the first 15 hours of attendance at the Centre. This situation is being investigated more thoroughly to see how it compares to other ABE programs; some strategies are being developed to help counter this early attrition.

Other OBE Programs

Through its Continuing Education Department, OBE offers ABE in a variety of settings which are either completely Board sponsored or cooperatively sponsored either by the Board and community groups, government or private corporations. The programs include:

Adult Day School Programs;

Adult Night School Programs;

Tutorial Programs in an individualized setting;

Parents As Learners Programs (PAL) set up in elementary schools to meet the educational needs of parents in these and surrounding schools;

Special Needs Programs for physically and developmentally handicapped adults, and psychiatrically disabled adults; and

Community Programs offered in familiar community centres or housing developments where learning can proceed in more informal ways.

The Future of TLC

The funding for the rent and operational expenses of the Learning Centre comes through the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development on a renewable annual basis. Despite a generous decrease in the rent by the landlord of the Centre space, rent is still an expensive item and a cause of some worry to the tenants and the OBE. Because of the costs involved, the long-term future of TLC is uncertain.

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PART II

Innovations

ALSO WORKS - OTTAWA

Alternative Learning Styles and Outlooks (ALSO) is a non-profit charitable organization which was founded by a small group of adult educators in 1979.

ALSO believes that:

-All individuals in our society have the right to full participation.
-In our society, basic literacy is not a luxury; it is a right.
-All adults have the capacity to learn, to create, to develop.
-Alternative approaches are required for individualized learning.
-A co-operative style of work best promotes learning and personal growth.

ALSO Works is an industrial cleaning project that is now into its third year of operation. It is a successful self-help project which has enabled former welfare recipients to build their self-esteem by earning their living, instead of accepting handouts. The process of acquiring literacy skills usually takes longer than many potential learners realize. People do not necessarily have bright futures because they enrol in literacy classes. Functional literacy does not guarantee a job in the labour force or an affluent future. The group of learners who started the cleaning project began to realize some of these things and although they came to ALSO to learn to read and write, they decided to try to make their own jobs.

The group did its own fund-raising to get started and saved the money until they had enough to buy the necessary equipment. They started with a bucket and a mop and then went on to purchase their own buffer and vacuum. They started with some trial cleaning contracts for short periods and these were extended for a year. They now bring in $50,000 a year from contracts and could have more, but the group does not want to expand. There is a team of six people--three work full-time and three part-time. They earn $7.50 an hour plus benefits.

ALSO has operated on a horizontal or collective decision-making model and this has carried over to ALSO Works. There is no boss. One of the staff members is there in a leadership role but the group decides policies on sick leave, seniority, holidays and so on. The group meets every Monday morning to decide the work schedule, to discuss new contracts, to do invoicing and book-keeping. Some of the group continue with their reading and writing, but the full-time workers find it difficult to work and study. However, the experience of creating their own employment and running their own business has been a very positive one. Three people came off welfare and have more money than they did before starting the project.

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HUMBER HOTLINE - KEELESDALE CAMPUS, HUMBER COLLEGE, TORONTO

Giving voice to literacy students through the creation of their own materials is an increasingly common practice, especially in community-based literacy programs. Humber College has applied the principle to higher literacy levels and created a practical communications course through the production of a magazine Humber Hotline.

Humber Hotline began in December 1986 as a spontaneous response from a Humber sessional instructor to an invitation from Brock University to share student writing. Two issues were produced in rapid succession. When the instructor left at the end of December, other members of the teaching team decided to sustain the interest and energy. A Hotline committee composed of students with an instructor as advisor was set up. Membership is open to all students in the level 3/4 program on the campus as well as representatives from other classes. The committee meets once a week and all production tasks are coordinated through the committee. Committee members decide how meetings will be conducted and make all policy decisions related to the Hotline. One member chairs the meeting, another acts as secretary.

Each monthly issue of the Hotline is produced by the students. The production tasks are typing/word-processing, proof-reading, announcements, layout and graphics, and circulation. For each of these tasks there is a team and a team captain who has the responsibility for coordinating that task. In addition, there is an overall coordinator of production. A production flow chart has been worked out with the instructor intervening at key points in the process.

The actual writing process is integrated into the Level 3/4 communications program (equivalent to grades 9-12 English). About half of the students are immigrants with a good basic knowledge of English as a second language or dialect. Most students have a lot of life experience and a lot to say about it, but none are able to write well in English when they enter the program. Before the Hotline, written stories ended up in files; after the Hotline, writing came alive as students discussed each other's stories and learned how to edit their own and others' material. They took ownership of the process and production. Instructor involvement is necessary for providing continuity and establishing the process in this continuous intake program. New students are encouraged to learn along with more experienced ones.

Writing, formerly an isolated activity, is now a participatory one and one which has a real audience. All students in the Level 3/4 program must participate in some capacity in the production of the Hotline. Credits are given for attendance at meetings and for participating in the production. Articles in the Hotline range from biographical anecdotes from around the world, recipes, puzzles, news of Humber happenings and reflective pieces. Much is also said about the Hotline itself.

The Hotline not only provides an opportunity for an expression of students' concerns and interests, but offers a chance to obtain some useful skills in production and/or maintenance functions. Students indicate that they have gained self-confidence, independence and leadership skills in

addition to strengthening their reasoning and problem-solving abilities. Instructor Anne Thom won a College Innovator of the Year Award at Humber College in the Spring of 1989 for her work with Humber Hotline and was the College nominee to the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) for their Innovation in Teaching Award.

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MULTILINGUAL LITERACY CENTRE - TORONTO

This is a new Centre which is designed to meet the mother-tongue literacy needs of the diverse immigrant groups of Toronto. St. Christopher House, a long-established settlement house in Toronto's inner core has had a mother tongue literacy program for Portuguese speakers for several years. The issue of mother tongue literacy received more attention in Toronto with the publication of the Toronto Board of Education's The Right to Learn report in October 1985. Under the heading "languages of instruction" the following paragraph appears:

> . . . Those whose first language is neither English nor French will learn either in their own language at first and later in English or French, or, from the beginning, in both their own language and English or French. Adult learners, who do not have English or French as their first languages, may often develop needed skills through increased literacy in their first languages. Often, too, ideas are more easily understood if they are explained in the learner's own language. (p. 23)

Later in the report where recommendations are made, "use of first language instruction as an initial step towards the acquisition of national language skills" appears as a recommended learning strategy (p. 27 and p. 52).

From these statements, community discussion with Board trustees was initiated which eventually resulted in the formation of a Steering Committee to investigate the setting up of a Multilingual Literacy Centre. The Steering Committee recommended incorporation, and a Board of Directors came into being. A location in a public school was found and a coordinator was hired in the Summer of 1988. Secretarial support is available one day a week. The Centre is to offer training, develop resources in multilingual literacy, and provide direct service.

Different linguistic communities were approached to determine level of need and interest and representatives of these groups were invited to participate in the first training session for volunteer tutors held in the Spring of 1989. Language groups represented included Portuguese, Spanish, Urdu and Punjabi. Trained tutors will work with adults from their own linguistic community to provide mother tongue literacy.

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ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AT A DISTANCE
THE INDEPENDENT LEARNING CENTRE, ONTARIO

Adult Basic Literacy (ABL), Adult Basic English, and English as a Second Language (ESL) non-credit distance education courses are available from the Ontario Ministry of Education's Independent Learning Centre (ILC). These are home study courses for adults who want to improve their use of English and their reading and writing skills but who cannot attend a program in their community. Some of the courses, however, are being used in community-based literacy programs, in combination with other materials. ABL and ESL require a volunteer tutor to work with the student.

The first course offered was English as a Second Language in 1984. Early in 1986 Adult Basic Literacy Part One was made available. Currently there are two ABL courses. Each course has eight lessons and each lesson has two parts: the tutor/student guide and the student book. There is an audio cassette tape for each part. The tutor/student guide and tape provide an introduction to each lesson as well as suggesting ways for the student and tutor to work together on the lesson. The student book and tape provide the reading material and exercises for the student. ABL Part Three is under production. ABL Part Four has yet to be created. Both Parts Three and Four will have 10 lessons each making a total of 36 lessons for the ABL course when it is completed. Part One of the Francophone ABL program is now available. It uses a psycholinguistic approach and follows the same format as the ABL courses.

The first two parts of the ABL course are mainly motivational. They are based on the premise that reading is not something magical--it is obtaining meaning from print. Students are encouraged to use what they already know about language and their world and to see themselves as readers. Each lesson contains a variety of reading as well as suggestions for finding or developing other material so students can select items of interest to them.

The student must have someone who can read and write to help tutor him/her in this process. A family member or friend may be able to help. According to ILC guidelines, a volunteer tutor is expected to:

-read the course descriptions to the student;
-help the student enrol in the course of his or her choice;
-receive the course materials on behalf of the student;
-provide the student with encouragement and practice.

Qualified teachers with experience in ABE are available to provide backup support through telephone conversations with students and tutors.

When a student has completed all four parts of the ABL course it is envisaged that they will have sufficient reading and writing skills to be independent learners and could go on to the Adult Basic English Course. There are two parts of ten lessons each for this course and there is an audio cassette tape with each lesson. Part One is written at a grade 4-5 reading level and Part Two is higher. Together, they are seen as a bridge between the ABL courses and the grade 9 correspondence credit courses or

courses of a similar level at an institution. The Adult Basic English Course is deemed to have been particularly successful. The courses are free to enrolled students, but course materials are available on a purchase basis to others.

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READING AND WRITING FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE - OTTAWA

In October 1987 the Capital Region Centre for the Hearing Impaired (CRCHI) in Ottawa received a grant from the Ontario Ministry for Skills Development to start up a tutoring program for deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the Ottawa-Carleton area.

The part-time coordinator was hired in January 1988 and the first tutor orientation session was held later that month. Matching of the first tutors and learners occurred in February. Recruitment was made through community agencies, the deaf community groups and personal contacts. Many of the tutors were recruited from sign language classes/teachers. Twenty four learners were involved in the program during the first seven months.

Most of the pairs meet at the Centre during scheduled group times in order to avail themselves of the support and ideas of the coordinator. The Centre is open six hours a week for tutoring and some learners come to the Centre for that number of hours to counteract the social isolation they feel on the outside. Of the 24 learners, there were 14 men and 10 women. The average age was between 25 and 39 years. Nineteen of the learners were learning English as a second language while they were learning to read and write. The mother tongues were: American Sign Language, Langue des Signes Quebecois, French, Sign Language from Sri Lanka and English. Some learners had not acquired fluency in any language.

The range of topics explored by the learners is similar to what learners in other programs want--studying for a driver's test, to help their children with school work, write letters, cook recipes, etc. However, the coordinator and tutors found astounding gaps in the learners' understanding of basic information. This situation is symptomatic of the isolation experienced by deaf people. They are excluded from information sources such as radio, television, public address systems and conversations. If they have difficulty reading, they are also excluded from information sources such as newspapers, posters, captioned television, brochures and books. Thus, if deaf people are not given the information directly, one can conclude, they do not learn about it.

Deaf and hard of hearing people need literacy skills for all the same reasons that other people need to read and write. In addition, they need to read to utilize any of the devices and systems which have been designed to help them. Such devices are:

- -TDDs (Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf)
  - -the user types messages over the phone;
  - -messages received move across a screen which displays 20 characters at a time;
- -Bell Relay Service
  - -the user can contact persons who do not have TDDs through an operator;
- -Closed captioning
  - -many television programs are now captioned but the written English used for adult programming is usually at grade 7/8 level or higher (user needs a special decoder to see the captions on the TV screen);

-Notes
  -written notes are often the easiest way for deaf people to communicate with people who do not know sign language, but the level of English used by co-workers, sales and service personnel can vary greatly. (Some of the learners enrolled in the program were government employees who wanted to improve their memo writing.)

Thus, the start up of a program specifically for deaf and hard-of-hearing people would require some additional training in the use of the above devices. Personnel (volunteer and staff) who are fluent in American Sign Language would also need to be recruited. Purchase of necessary equipment would be an additional start-up cost. Movies, videos and other visual devices become important as learning aids. The deaf community is an honest, straightforward community, and it is important that anyone starting up a program for them be part of that community--have worked in it and know it, in order to have the trust of the learners.

During the 1989 year, new activities which have been or are being introduced into the program include: a newsletter, a Tai-Chi class, a Level 6 sign language class, a cooking group and a computer club. In addition to the tutoring and the above activities, the Centre also acts as a drop-in during the scheduled hours for people who want help with a specific short-term task.

The coordinator of this literacy program for the deaf also teaches in a programme for deaf-blind adults sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development and the Deaf-Blind Services, C.N.I.B., Ottawa. There are currently 10 learners in this program who use a variety of ways to communicate--American Sign Language, Jumbo Dot Braille, hand-over-hand signing, hand-over-hand printing. For both programs the coordinator has to adapt and develop suitable learning materials. Developing picture files, for instance, has been important in the deaf program.

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NATIVE LITERACY PROGRAMS - ONTARIO

Community-based literacy programs have evolved among Native groups in 12 Northern locations and 12 Southern locations in Ontario. They are found in urban centres and on Reserves. The Ontario Native Literacy Coalition acts as a provincial umbrella group for the Native Literacy programs. None of the programs were visited, but a brief selection is presented here to give some idea of the diversity of programming taking place in the Province of Ontario.

Native Women's Resource Centre - Toronto

This Centre stresses Native culture. It has a one-to-one tutoring program, but tutors are not necessarily of Native origin, hence a cross-cultural component is part of the tutor-training. Tutors meet in houses or in the Centre. Native culture is stressed in the Centre and has had some interesting spin-offs. For example, the literacy program assistant was a traditional Native dancer who taught the women and their children how to dance and the significance and history of the dances. This led to new vocabulary and the idea for a dance-book. The Centre received a grant from the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation to produce the book which is now available under the title "Neem-dah" - Let's Dance.

Council Fire - Toronto

This program consists of Native and non-Native tutors who work with Natives in correctional institutions such as the Toronto Jail and provincial centres. The group wants to put together a booklet on how to work with Natives in institutions.

Ojibway Sarnia Reserve Program

This program is co-sponsored between the local Board of Education and the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development. The former pays a facilitator's (instructor) salary to work in the community. The Ministry pays for a liaison person from the community to find and encourage people to attend the classes at the community centre on the reserve. The Board has a van which happens to be driven by the Chief. He calls at the learners' homes to take them to classes.

Cape Croker Reserve.

Program makes use of oral history as a teaching/learning strategy.

Hamilton Regional Indian Centre

This Centre uses the Learning Circle approach in its program. The coaches and learners meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays and sit in a circle and discuss current issues relevant to either the learners or the coaches who may be Native or non-Native. From the discussion, key words and ideas are written down and used in word recognition, spelling and other exercises.

Northern Fly-in Communities

In Northern Ontario the Ministry of Skills Development pays the salary of a bilingual liaison person from the community to serve the Oji-Cree communities. Classes have been held with an Associate Teacher of the Independent Learning Centre. (The ILC pays the teacher's salary and provides course materials.) Some of the curriculum has been altered to reflect the realities of Northern life--boats, float planes and skidoos replace cars, buses and the subway for example. In one of the programs there is a 72 year old male learner who is entering his third year in the program.

Seine River

Seine River (Northwest of Thunder Bay) has an Integrated Learning Centre with a high-tech classroom. The Centre is in a renovated community hall and offers basic literacy, upgrading skills, a library resource centre and computers hooked into the Contact North network.

Anishnabe Wilderness Camp (Kenora area)

This camp is an alternative to incarceration for minor offences and is open to any male who chooses this option. It is primarily a Life Skills program with academic upgrading. The coordinator there saw a need to teach people how to get their driver's license and devised a game on driving similar to Trivial Pursuit. It is to be published.

Other programs exist in Friendship Centres and in Band Offices and Resource Centres. For literacy initiatives among Native people it is important:

- -to get the cooperation and support of relevant regional and provincial organizations;
- -to get the Elders involved--once they accept the idea, it is easier to establish a program; and
- -to bring literacy into the culture rather than the culture into literacy.

Audio-visual aids dealing with Native culture have been found to be particularly helpful.

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